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ECCLESIA.

ECCLESIA:

Church Problems Considered,

IN A SERIES OF ESSAYS.

EDITED BY

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THE principles of self-government, and of personal and congregational freedom, are asserting themselves with great force through the entire ecclesiastical sphere. Reverence for conscience is widely associated with the craving for truth. Those who have enjoyed any special opportunities for acquiring knowledge, or whose opinions on controverted questions represent a peculiar phase of our national life, are encouraged to speak freely. The present is not, therefore, an inappropriate time for writers who have long been practically acquainted with the excellencies and aims of a considerable section of the Free Churches of Britain, to give combined utterance to some of the theological, ecclesiastical, and political principles, which are more or less embodied in these organizations.

The following Essays have been written independently of each other. This circumstance may be held to explain occasional repetition of arguments from different points of view, and some variations of sentiment. The authors are severally and solely responsible for the ideas they have ventured to express.

JANUARY, 1870.

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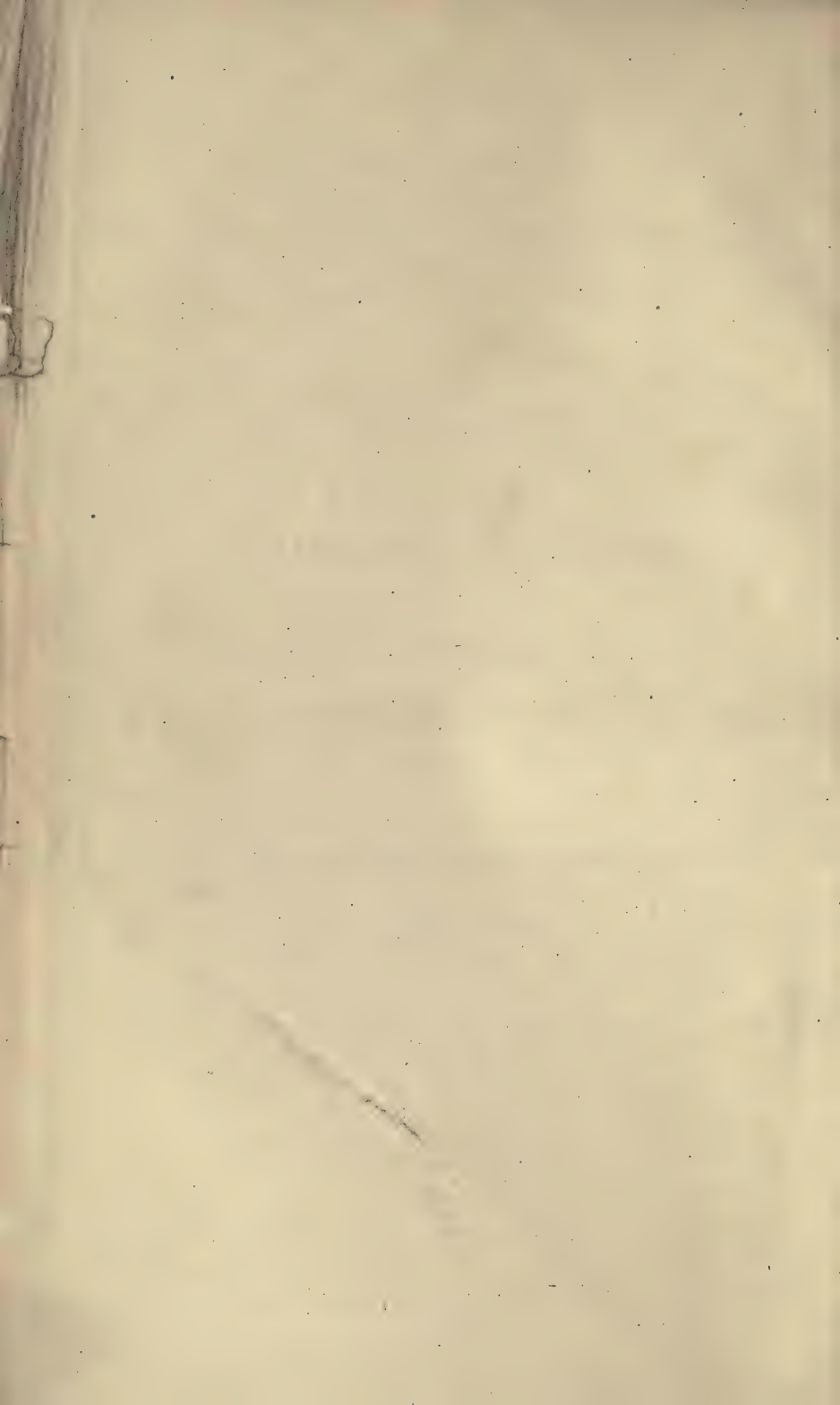
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PRIMITIVE ECCLESIA:

ITS AUTHORITATIVE PRINCIPLES
AND ITS MODERN REPRESENTATIONS.

BY

REV. JOHN STOUGHTON, D.D. EDIN.



PRIMITIVE ECCLESIA:

ITS AUTHORITATIVE PRINCIPLES AND ITS MODERN REPRESENTATIONS.

THOSE who are acquainted with English Ecclesiastical Controversy must be struck with the change which has come over it of late years. It used to be the fashion to recognize Scripture as our supreme authority upon this subject, to repair to it as the main storehouse of argument, and to regard it throughout as the last standard of appeal.

No doubt the old mode of discussion had its disadvantages; texts were handled in a narrow unscientific spirit of criticism; some were applied to a service which a larger and more accurate acquaintance with the Divine records cannot justify; and some, by being squeezed, crushed, and distorted, were made to mean much more than could have been originally designed.

The amount of information on ecclesiastical points was not carefully measured; not correctly estimated; more was supposed to be taught than a deep and thorough investigation warrants us to believe. By some controversialists little or no scope was left for the action of enlightened reason in the application of what the Bible teaches, and in the practical administration of matters concerning which the Bible is silent.

The method is now changed. Ecclesiastical subjects are commonly debated on grounds of history, expediency, and reason. By many writers no endeavour at all is made to ascertain, by a survey of those parts of Scripture which refer to the primitive Church, what was the nature of its institutes; and, consequently, the question is not asked—After what manner should the teaching of the New Testament be applied to the regulation of Church affairs in the present day? Here and there a text of Scripture may be cited, if it happen to agree with a prior conclusion, or if it should chance to discredit an antagonist's position. Interest and novelty may, according to this method, be imparted to a discussion of well-worn topics. The danger of a threadbare iteration of familiar quotations may be avoided; a philosophical cast may dignify a discussion. Light may be shed upon political and social problems, and practical suggestions of considerable value may be pertinently supplied; but the point is left untouched—What help does the Bible afford in these matters? Yet, surely, that is the chief question after all. At any rate the inquiry is one of great interest. If the classical scholar devotes himself to the study of all he can find in the literature of the ancients, bearing any relation to the rise of the Greek Republics, or to the early stages of the Roman Commonwealth—if English readers delight to trace whatever can be discovered respecting the early constitution of the government of this country; surely a Christian man must feel pleasure in examining every Scripture reference, even the most minute, to early communities,—which, beyond those of Greece or Rome, or England, are affecting our moral and religious destinies as individuals, and are really the parent stock from which have sprung all the ecclesiastical organizations of Christendom.

If the sacred notices of a primitive Church be so few,

so scanty, and so insufficient, that no idea can be satisfactorily formed of its fundamental principles; or if Scripture conclusions on the subject are inapplicable to the settlement of modern controversies; or if the conditions of society have so completely changed, that apostolical precedents are necessarily obsolete; at least let these positions be clearly established, that we may know just where we are, and search after sufficient reasons for placing the whole subject upon a new foundation. In the following Essay we must bear in mind the position into which Church questions have drifted, and direct our investigations accordingly.

The main object will be to ascertain what may be learnt from the New Testament respecting the nature of the primitive *Ecclesia*; to consider how far its principles are binding upon Christendom; to discover the bearing of our conclusions upon a great question of the present day; and to point out to what extent the Scripture ideal is embodied in existing organizations.

WHAT WAS THE CHARACTER OF THE PRIMITIVE ECCLESIA?

The first *Ecclesia*—or Church—consisted of the believers in Jerusalem, including the Apostles of Jesus Christ, the disciples who associated with them after the Ascension, and the persons who, on the day of Pentecost embraced the faith. Drawn out of the world by mutual sympathies springing from an experience at once new and blessed, and evincing a simplicity of character perhaps as great as their knowledge generally was small, they communed, worshipped, and worked together, in order to propagate the truths which they had received fresh from heaven.

The *genesis* and formation of this kind of community—this clustering of men around certain Divine prin-

ciples of faith, fellowship, and order—and the unfolding of so new and strange a social nebula into new and strange social worlds, may be studied historically and analytically—the progress of the idea in its practical embodiment being traceable step by step through the Acts, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse until the word Church, at first popular and vague, assumes a technical precision—and the sympathetic gathering, on the first Pentecost at Jerusalem, reappears in the seven organized societies of Asia Minor. The earliest idea of a Christian Church is that of a brotherhood for the maintenance and diffusion of religious convictions. Associations for religious and benevolent purposes, apart from a distinct recognition of particular opinions, have been common enough in all ages; but such associations are plainly distinguishable from the *Ecclesiæ* of the Acts. For the disciples in Jerusalem were emphatically believers; the pupils of a Divine Teacher, the earnest and devout recipients and advocates of truths unknown to, or opposed by, the world around them. The new converts continued steadfastly in “the apostles’ *doctrine*,” their confederation from its commencement being “a pillar and ground of *truth*.” Whether or not the term *doctrine* be meant in the rigid sense of dogma—whether the word “*truth*” be equivalent to theological principles or Christian sentiments—at any rate the shield as first displayed by the Church was not like the shield of Amphiaraus, a blank surface without device, but rather like the shield of Minerva, which Phidias made with his name inwrought in such a manner, that the one could not be extracted without destroying the other. No merely vague religious feeling constituted the nexus of fellowship, but faith in a *Divine name*, the name of the world’s Redeemer: faith in Him as a Divine person, the ground of penitential trust, and the foundation of saintly hope—faith in the

doctrines respecting Him taught by men who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Primitive truth and the primitive Church were one: or at least so connected do they appear that the idea of the latter dissolves, when the idea of the former is withdrawn. The Church comes before us at the beginning as a sympathetic consociation for maintaining and teaching the doctrines, as well as for cherishing and diffusing the spirit of the Gospel. The Church is not only a creation of the genius of Christianity, it is a herald of the principles of Christianity.

A line must be drawn between Christianity as a religion and Christianity as a theology, between its vital essence and its scientific expression; and we may trace in the apostolic age a progress in the unfolding of truth even as we do a progress in the organizing of institutes. The study of the Epistles in their chronological order with this reference, is alike interesting and instructive in the highest degree; and the thoughtful reader of them, when they are so arranged, will find how, in succession, one truth after another came into prominent and distinct manifestation before the mind of Christendom—the great Inspirer of the first age adopting throughout a law of development in harmony with maxims laid down by the Incarnate Word.

On the side of fellowship, as on the side of faith, the Church assumed a distinctive character. Not only were the members united, but the object of their aggregation is seen to be the culture of a unity which sunk down infinitely deeper than the roots of ordinary communities. "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." "Great grace was upon them all." Union is exhibited as both the beginning and the end of their fellowship. It appears as the seed, and as the harvest of a new kind of love

with which the world was to be sown. Sympathy brought disciples together, and they came into fellowship that they might deepen that sympathy. Their sympathy was a sentiment : it was also a life, an unselfish motive, a Divine power, impelling its possessors to work for one another's benefit, and for other men's salvation.

It has been asked, "Is a Church a body of men formed by the combination of certain men, who agree in reverencing the name of Christ, or who have the same opinion respecting His doctrine ; or is it a body instituted by God Himself, to which men as men are invited to belong, and to which no one can refuse to belong without abandoning his own human privileges, and denying the privileges of his fellow men ?" *

I answer unhesitatingly *both* ; for how can men accept the universal invitation without agreement in reverencing "the name of Christ ?" How can men belong to a body instituted by God Himself, and claim their own privileges and those of others, without faith in that institution as a Divine one, and as resting on divinely revealed principles ? How can they form a *Christian body* of men at all, without having to some extent "the same opinion respecting *His* doctrine," and without in consequence entering into "combination" or communion ?

A community of the peculiar kind described in the New Testament, could not but embody a principle of selectness. In the nature of things, it could not be a mere concourse of social atoms ; of necessity there worked within it a law of affinity, as real as any which in chemistry draws together substances of similar kinds. Like attracts like. Believers consorted with believers. "Being let go they went to their own company,"—a statement, which expresses a moral fact deeper than

* Maurice's Kingdom of Christ, ii. 1. I thank Mr. Maurice for admitting that nearly all founders of sects have had glimpses of a principle deeper than that of mere combination. A Church is a combination : but it is something more.

the mere circumstance which it records. And the law of selection and affinity, acting on its negative side, could not but become the innocent occasion of repulsion or exclusion. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness, and what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel, and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Such an inquiry is perfectly natural, and admits but of one answer. The human race is composed of alienated tribes, a nation may consist of disaffected masses, a family may be divided in views and interests, associations for particular purposes may contain heterogeneous materials; but no company meeting together from a sentiment of union, and for the promotion of union,—from moral sympathies, and with the desire of spreading them, wave beyond wave, circle beyond circle,—can do otherwise than lay down rules of admission and order which must exclude or must remove those who are antagonistic or alien. Every modern association, every club based upon friendship and acquaintance, the democratic as well as the aristocratic, is an example of this. Discipline is indispensable to a society, as distinguished from a mob. It arises not as something accidental, or conventional; but as a necessary outgrowth of the deepest and strongest social life.

The primitive Christian community could not be called exclusive in any odious sense. Odious exclusiveness can only mean pride, selfishness, antipathy, a dislike to the *οἱ πολλοί*,—a desire to shut out as many as possible from the privileged enclosure;—but an *Ecclesia* was, as far as possible, removed from feelings of that description; for it sought to bring as many as possible within the limits of the fold, and refused none who had an honest desire to enter within its borders. Yet it is remarkable that in an

association framed to rest on the corner stones of a Catholic charity, an awful act of exclusion occurs in the case of Ananias and Sapphira,* and it is also plain that laws of discipline are laid down by the Apostle Paul, laws which on reflection are recognized by us as natural and necessary, for healthy bodies do, and ever must, throw off whatever is diseased and corrupt.

Next to fellowship comes worship. They who "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship" also united "in breaking of bread and in prayers." Religious people, meeting for religious purposes, could not do otherwise than engage in acts of praise and supplication. From the circumstances of the case the worship must have been simple. The idea of any elaborate ritual is inconceivable. Not a word is said of vestments, or of attitudes, or of any forms at all; indeed no room existed for such regulations, and all must admit that things of that kind, whether right or wrong, are entirely the production of succeeding ages. Whatever more the breaking of bread may denote—probably a social meal, some sort of *Agape*, or love feast, it is obvious that the communion of the Lord's Supper constituted an essential part of the social service. It is not only curious, but important, to notice how eating together appears as a symbol of Christian union and charity, and how this symbol became complicated with early controversies. Jews and Gentiles had been wont to keep aloof from each other's tables. The "clean" would not eat with the "unclean," but they were called upon to do so, after caste had been broken by Peter's vision at Joppa. People from the east and west, the north and south, were to sit down together in the Kingdom of God. Consequently, a new social law entwined itself around the communion of the body and blood of Christ; yet not so

* Acts v. 1-11.

† 1 Cor. v.; 2 Cor. ii.; Gal. vi. 1; 2 Thess. iii. 6.

as to obscure the doctrinal signification of the institute as pointing to the peculiar method of human redemption. The sacrificial atonement of our Lord was prominently exhibited, and inseparable from that, there existed a recognition of the fact, that having made peace by the blood of His Cross, having rent the vail between man and God, He also broke down the middle wall of partition between man and man. The initiatory rite of Baptism had become included in the ceremonial service of Christianity; and the simplicity, we might almost say, the nakedness of that service altogether, is conspicuously original and remarkable.

Thus far we reach a threefold result. Faith, including theology; fellowship, including discipline; and worship, including prayer, praise, baptism, and the Lord's Supper,—these were fundamental elements in the original polity.

As to the promulgation of the faith—preaching is a Divine institute, characteristic of the Church; and also of the Gospel which the Church proclaims. Although by no means confined to any particular order of men—for “those who were scattered abroad, by the persecution of Stephen, went everywhere preaching the Word;”—yet in point of fact, the office of preacher was fulfilled, principally by the Apostles and their companions; and it is remarkable that, in the memorable passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, respecting office and instrumentality in the Church, the reference throughout is mainly to *teaching*, rather than *government*. “And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Other functions besides preaching had to be discharged by officers appointed over the new societies, in order to the furtherance of their well being.

We have noticed Christian disciples as grouped together by spiritual affinities, we must also regard them as grouped together in relation to particular localities. People in cities and districts, being converted by the Gospel, associated together, as did those at Jerusalem; and in their social proceedings, they acted under direction of the Apostles, and of their companions and representatives. Paul "departed with Barnabas to Derbe, and when they had preached the Gospel in that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra and to Iconium and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples,—and when they had ordained them elders (presbyters) in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." * Again, Paul and Silas went throughout Syria and Cilicia confirming the *Ecclesiæ*.†

Paul besought Timothy to abide at Ephesus that he might charge some that they should teach no other doctrine than he had taught. He described to Timothy what a bishop should be, evidently meaning by a bishop the same officer as he subsequently called an elder. And Paul further charged Timothy to commit what he had received to faithful men who should be able to teach others also.‡ The same Apostle left Titus in Crete, that he might set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city.§

I have thought it best in this rapid sketch to adhere as closely as possible to New Testament language, and to refrain generally from using equivalents, since modern

* Acts xiv. 21, 3.

† Acts xv. 41.

According to the true reading in Acts ii. 47, the words should be, "the Lord added to their number." The first instance, then, of the occurrence of the word *Ecclesia* in the Acts is in v. 11; next vii. 38; viii. 1, 3; ix. 31, where the correct reading is, "The Church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria." (See Tischendorf and Alford.) In these instances, is the word used in any technical sense? Does not the technical usage begin with Acts xiv. 21?

‡ 1 Tim. i. 3; 1 Tim. iii. 1; 2 Tim. ii. 1.

§ Titus i. 5.

expressions respecting these subjects may prove much more, or much less than equivalent; perhaps they are quite different, at any rate, they often mislead.

So far, then, we find Apostles, and persons specially commissioned by Apostles, performing certain kinds of religious superintendence. Such officers, however, were rather over the Churches than within them. They were not properly ecclesiastical, looking at the nature and constitution of a local *Ecclesia*, but they were really super-ecclesiastical. They appear as founders and directors of Churches, *ab extra*, rather than as ministers of them *ab intra*. Officers of the latter kind whom they ordained are called elders or overseers, presbyters or bishops,—words used interchangeably, about which there has been much controversy. The words have acquired, in the course of time, technical significations, pointing to what are styled two orders, but that no such technical distinction exists in the New Testament, distinguished episcopalian scholars are prepared to admit:* and I may add, that to insist upon a distinction of meaning in these titles, is by no means essential to the maintenance of an argument in support of diocesan episcopacy. We may then at once set the distinction aside, and affirm that there remain only Apostles and their representative officers, *ab extra* in relation to particular local *Ecclesiæ*, and presbyters or bishops, purely spiritual officers, *ab intra*.

The Christian ministry has proved a theme fertile of debate. Arguments of conflicting kinds have grown up under the husbandry of opposing parties. Plenty of dragon's teeth have been sown, plenty of warriors have been reaped, and their fate has been that of Jason's harvest of armed men: they have nearly, if not quite, destroyed one another. A complete idea of the

* See Alford on 1 Tim. iii. 1; also Whately's Kingdom of Christ, and Lightfoot's Commentary on the Philippians.

Christian ministry should be sought in its latest development, and the last development appears in the seven Epistles of the Apocalypse. In them *the Angel* is mentioned. I am aware that difficulties beset the interpretation of the term. It is the forlorn hope of some advocates of diocesan episcopacy, and to it, congregational critics of learning and candour strangely affix a symbolical interpretation. That it does not mean a diocesan prelate I infer from the previous writings in the New Testament. That it is symbolical, I see no reason to believe. The contents of the Epistles relate to the members of each Society at large, and it is only consistent to regard the letters as addressed to the chief officer. Ephesus, when Paul was at Miletus, had its one Church, with a plurality of elders. At the time when the Apocalypse was written, that plurality could scarcely have dwindled down to a ministerial unit. Hence I cannot resist the conclusion that some one of the Ephesian pastors acted as chief superintendent *ab intra* of the Church; not as a diocesan prelate, but as a *primus inter pares*.

In connection with the final development of the ministry, another circumstance appears. The seven Churches, addressed in the seven Epistles, are presented as distinct from each other; no sign of common government is visible; no other bonds of union amongst the Churches can be recognized, than the interchange of common spiritual sympathies and subjection to a common Divine law. The seven-branched candlestick, chosen by the Son of Man as an emblem of the seven Societies, signifies at once their organic independence, and their moral unity.

It should be further remarked, that congregational pastors were rulers.* They ruled in the name of their

* 1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 17.

Divine Master, administering *His* laws, not enacting any of their own; yet, as in Jewish cities, in Greek Republics, and in the Roman Commonwealth, popular influence obtained in connection with magisterial control and authority; so in Christian Churches,—which although divinely constituted, were not framed irrespective of harmony with ancient usage, political wisdom and common sense,—the people had a voice in the election of officers, the exercise of discipline, and the management of affairs. In the case of the election of seven men of honest report to be appointed by Apostles over the business of the daily ministration, the practice of a popular choice is undeniable,* and in the absence of anything to the contrary, it may be fairly inferred to have been the practice also in other ecclesiastical elections. Apostles appointed the seven at Jerusalem, yet notwithstanding this there was a popular election; and therefore, the appointment by Apostles of bishops in Churches, by no means excludes the popular mode of electing them. Also the consent of the people in acts of discipline is implied.†

Besides the office of bishop, Paul mentions the office of deacon. Of candidates for it he says, “Let these also first be proved, then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.” “They that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.” In studying these words we must lay aside sectarian prejudice; and if we connect them, as I think we ought, with the history in the Acts, of the appointment of the seven, we are led to inquire whether the words do not suggest the idea of other functions than ministering to the necessities of poor saints? No particular class of women is mentioned under the name of deaconesses, but “widows” are alluded to as a class of female

* Acts vi. 1-7.

† 1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 7.

officers, or workers, and a rule respecting age is laid down for admission "into the number:" hints also are given as to their character and employments; but how far they constituted an organized body admits of doubt.* Their place in Scripture, however, is no more to be overlooked by any one honestly desiring to know the exact nature of a primitive Church, than the place assigned to the following remarkable ecclesiastical distinction: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." What follows expresses the law of pastoral support: "For the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward." It would be a waste of words here, to adduce evidence in proof of the fact, that the primitive Churches derived their revenues entirely from voluntary gifts;—State endowment, or any kind of compulsory taxation, being then impossible.

An important inquiry remains in connection with the subject of the perpetuation of the primitive fellowship. What was the extent of a primitive Church? One thing is plain, we nowhere find in the New Testament any trace of a Church, co-extensive with the limits of an empire, the limits of a country, or the limits of a province. Nor does the conception of a Church so large comport with the conception of a Church as founded upon any considerable degree of knowledge and sympathy; or as capable of meeting, at least sometimes, "in one place."† On the other hand, allusion is made (A.D. 57) to an *Ecclesia* in the house of Aquila at Ephesus; and (A.D. 58) to an *Ecclesia* in his house at Rome,—probably the premises which he employed as a tent-maker

* See a carefully written article in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible on the word "Deaconess." 1 Tim. v. 17, 18; also see 1 Cor. ix. 7-12.

† 1 Cor. xi. 20.

might be convenient for worship;*—also (about A.D. 62) to an *Ecclesia* in the house of Philemon at Colossæ :† and in the same year, to an *Ecclesia* in the house of Nymphas in that city.‡ Whether the term in these passages is to be taken in a specific and technical sense, as meaning an organized and complete Church, to say the least, admits of question, and in my opinion the question should be answered negatively, for this reason. In the 11th chapter of Acts v. 30 (A.D. 44), we first read of elders. Even the *Ecclesia* at Corinth, to which the Apostle wrote his first Epistle (A.D. 57), must at that time have been in a confused and inchoate condition. No mention is made of its having bishops; great irregularities prevailed; discipline was neglected; those who professed Christianity in the city at that time seem to have met for the exercise of their gifts, and for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, without what could be called definite organization. The *Ecclesia* at Corinth at that period cannot be considered as equivalent to what the Church afterwards became, with its full complement of bishops and deacons, and its regular method of government, discipline, and worship.

Now if the word *Ecclesia*, in its strictly technical sense can scarcely be applied to the assembly in the city of Corinth: how can we apply it in such a sense to companies of believers meeting about the same time, in the house of Aquila, whilst he resided at Ephesus, and then in the house of the same person, whilst he dwelt at Rome? Cenchrea, the harbour of Corinth, had in it an *Ecclesia* when Paul wrote to the Romans;§ and there probably existed a distinct Christian community—the harbour being nine miles distant from the city. In all other cases in which particular localities are mentioned, they

* 1 Cor. xvi. 19 (A.D. 57). The place Ephesus, where the Epistle was written, is pointed out in the 8th verse of the chapter. Rom. xvi. 3-5 (A.D. 58).

† Philemon 2 (A.D. 61 or 62). ‡ Col. iv. 15 (A.D. 61 or 62). § Rom. xvi. 1.

are cities ; putting aside the indecisive passages just mentioned, no instance can be found of more than a single Church in a single municipality ; the rule, it appears, being that a whole Church should meet at times in one place, and that one Church should be gathered out of one city. As Christians multiplied, the problem would arise—if the observance of the double rule be no longer possible, if all Christians in a large town cannot any longer meet in one place—which side of the rule shall be maintained, which side shall be surrendered ? Is the oneness of the locality to be preferred to the oneness of the body, or the oneness of the body to the oneness of the locality ? Looking at the strength of personal sympathy amongst primitive believers, and looking at the nature and ends of their organization, it seems most likely that they would be prepared to sacrifice a unity of place to a unity of persons ; yet that they would hold occasionally a large gathering on the same spot, for the sake of keeping alive religious sympathy, which existed within them as a second nature, and for the sake of enjoying a spiritual communion, which was felt by them as one of their deepest needs. They would be very unwilling to break up a large community into a number of sections organically distinct ; and having kept together as long as they could, when compelled to part they would make the partition as slight as possible.

A plurality of pastors in a large Church followed as a necessity, and accordingly the earliest Churches of which we read had more bishops than one.

But the primitive pastorate, although a plurality, could not be a hierarchy, for, as we have seen, there existed no distinction of orders, only the simplest official gradation ; if, indeed, a *primus inter pares* can be regarded as involving official gradation at all. Nor did the ministry bear the character of a priesthood, any more than it did the

character of a hierarchy. It offered no sacrifice but that of love and praise, in the presentation of which the people united equally with the ministers; and it never pointed to any vicarious service, save that of Christ Himself. Subject to anti-hierarchical and anti-sacerdotal limitations, the primitive ministry might legitimately develop itself in manifold ways of arrangement and operation, and doubtless did so, with a division of labour suited to particular gifts.

Nor does an example occur in the New Testament of any ecclesiastical assembly composed simply of persons sustaining ministerial office. The meeting described in the Acts of the Apostles differs essentially from the Councils and the Convocations of subsequent times. Paul and Barnabas were received of the *Church* and of the Apostles and elders. The Apostles and elders and the *whole Church* chose men of their own company to proceed with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch; and the Apostles and elders and *brethren* joined in writing the letter which was sent to the Christians of that city.* Of the body which decided the question in dispute the people formed an integral element.

The points I have suggested require expansion beyond what the limits of this Essay will allow; but I may be permitted to add that the central idea of a voluntary and congregational, not a national Church—of one Church in a city, not a plurality—of a Church resting on faith in distinctive truths, and exercising discipline amongst its members, continued to be embodied for a considerable period after the removal of the Apostles.

In the time of Clemens Romanus, the disciples of Christ in Corinth formed one Church, called the Church of God in Corinth. Those of Ephesus and Rome, not to go beyond the Syriac version of his Epistles, are called respectively by Ignatius, the Churches in those cities.

The number of members in the Carthaginian Church

* Acts xv, 4, 22, 23.

must have been very large, when Tertullian, remonstrating with Scapula, remarked that if that officer were to destroy the Christian people, he would extirpate the tenth part of the whole population.* The number of Christians in Rome and in Alexandria must have been larger still, and in each of these three cities all the people professing Christianity formed one distinct voluntary community, and only one. No early instance can be given of a Christian Church coincident in extent with the boundaries of a State, or of a plurality of distinct Churches in the same city,—except where a schism occurred,—or of a Christian community supported by other than voluntary contributions. Christians in the same city met together at certain times for common purposes—for communion, for discipline, and for the general management of affairs. Cyprian at Carthage superintended Church affairs in the presence, and with the council, of the people in general.† In Alexandria, at a later period, the orthodox in communion with Athanasius, maintained their unity by meeting together with him on the same spot, and by guarding their faith against that which they considered to be pernicious error. Of the same people, Athanasius says that at times they assembled in several places, which he describes as being “small and strait,”‡ and afterwards Epiphanius speaks of different meeting-places in the same city, each of which had its own presbyter or presbyters dwelling near to it; § a plan which, so far,—according to the latter of these writers and in the opinion of certain distinguished critics and archæologists,—was an Alexandrian peculiarity, the usual practice being for all the Christians in the same place to be served by members of the same presbytery.||

* Ad. Scap., s. 5.

† Athanasius Apol. Contra. Arianos, L. II.

|| Bingham's Christian Antiq., vol. ii. p. 429.

† Ep. xiv. 5; xvi. 3; xvii.

§ Epiphanius Hær., p. 69.

Bingham remarks, that the external polity and government of Churches, as to their limits and method of administration, agreed with the Imperial municipal arrangements.* They did so ultimately ; but they were not originally founded upon those arrangements. The government and discipline of bishops and presbyters in the first three centuries could not be territorial, they could be only congregational, comprising the voluntary professors of the Gospel in a certain district, and not laying claim to any control over the inhabitants in general. Bingham's allusions to the municipal model, whilst they serve to throw light upon the extent of the early Churches, also help to explain the rise and progress of prelacy ; but all the way through his learned disquisition he confuses the subject, by confounding the congregational with the territorial principle.

ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRIMITIVE INSTITUTE BINDING UPON THE CONSCIENCE OF CHRISTENDOM ?

We may at once answer in a general way : the evidence *primâ facie*, the proof presumptive is, that these principles having been adopted by divinely-commissioned Apostles, are an authority for ecclesiastical institutes and proceedings to the end of the world. They cannot, however, be used in conducting Christian affairs, without a comprehensive and thorough consideration, not only of their own nature and extent, but also of the circumstances and wants of mankind in modern times. There is no short cut by which thoughtful men can make their way through the numerous inquiries which beset the subject.

We are met by one or two preliminary questions upon our attempting to take the first step : Ought not the teaching of the Old Testament to be combined with that

* Christian Antiq., vol. ii. p. 253.

of the New before any Scriptural model of ecclesiastical polity can be framed at all? Some aver that the principles of the Jewish Church should be studied first, that they should then be combined with the principles of the early Christian communities, and that the result of this combination should form the standard of all subsequent proceedings. But against this, there lies an objection obvious and fatal.

The Jewish Church was, in certain respects, and those the most characteristic and striking, so utterly different from the Churches instituted by the Apostles, that a combination of the principles of the first, with the principles of the second, is simply impossible. New Testament precedents may be set aside for the sake of adopting Old Testament examples;—the system pursued by the early Christians may be exchanged for the system practised by the House of Israel; but the one can never be modified by the other. It is a question not of modification, but of revolution; as we see at once, when we compare the principal features of the one, with what were the prominent marks of the other.

The Jewish Church was national, and so constituted by law. Whatever theory may be entertained, whether that of alliance between Church and State, or that of the identity of Church and State, or that of the control of the one by the other, the fact of the State-nationality of the Israelitish religion remains. It formed a Church in its extent coincident with national boundaries, and in its order bound up with national laws. But it is certain that Christianity was not originally national either in the one sense or the other. Jewish Christians, indeed, wished and endeavoured to make the new Church national, after the old method; they sought to do so by extending it on the one side, and by limiting it on the other, according to the number of the seed of Jacob. An intense spirit of

nationality under this form animated all the Judaizing plans and practices of the teachers, whom Paul so sternly rebuked for their retrograde theories. The nationalizing of Christianity, in the nobler sense of its penetrating and purifying national life, lifting up the whole population to heights of virtue and excellence, so as to make Jerusalem the joy of the earth, the Apostle would have been glad enough to behold; but the nationalizing of it, in the sense of identifying the circle of its range, with the admeasurement of the land, or with the census of the people, he deprecated with an indignation as earnest as it was righteous. The religion of Christ he wished to see carried throughout the earth; walls of partition between country and country, between race and race, he sought to pull down; he aimed at making Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, one in Christ. But as to organized Churches, he planted them one after another distinctly and independently in city after city,—in this respect following examples of still earlier Apostolic zeal. Paul's Churches were confessedly congregational, not national—independent, not interlaced in the network of a political system. Congregationalism, such as his, completely vanishes, and is entirely lost in a national ecclesiasticism like that of Judaism.

The Jewish Church had a priesthood, a sacerdotal order—a caste appointed for the sole offering of sacrifices, and for the sole performance of ceremonies. But the earliest Christian ministers were of another kind; they preached, they ruled, they administered discipline, they baptized. The festival of the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the believers, but it is impossible to prove, from the New Testament, that Christian pastors alone *administered*—as it is sometimes termed—the holy rite; and it is significantly acknowledged by those to whose views it would be a support could they maintain the con-

trary, that "the tone of the New Testament is unsacramental, and the impression it leaves on the mind is not that of a priesthood and its attendant system."* To claim for the Christian ministry a sacerdotal character, is to revolutionize and overturn, not to develop or even supplement the original institution.

Jewish priests were supported partly by tithes, and partly by what the law had appropriated to their use, out of the offerings which they placed upon the altar. The tithes did not wholly fall into the hands of the priests—a share belonged to other Levites. No power seems to have existed for the compulsory enforcement of the claim attaching to the tribe thus divinely endowed. Certainly, nobody can maintain that any compulsory tithe system was ever established, or thought of, by the founders of Christendom. A tenth in some cases may be a fair and wise proportion of property to be bestowed voluntarily for religious uses; but not a word can be found in the New Testament to show that even a law of that kind, appealing only to spontaneous action, is there laid down. To plead the Jewish tithe system as sanctioning a legal charge on land is not merely to modify the method of contributing, it is really to shift the rights of revenue from the ground of voluntary tribute, and to place them upon another, and entirely opposite basis.

In speaking upon these points I do not touch the question whether, in our day, the maintenance of national Churches, or the institution of a priesthood, or the support of the ministry by means of tithes, be right or wrong. At present our thoughts are confined to the inquiry, Can the ecclesiastical constitution of Judaism be harmoniously incorporated with the Apostolic institutions of Christianity? The true answer is unquestionably in the negative.

* Tracts for the Times, No. 85, p. 58.

Further, it may be asked, *in limine*, Ought not the teaching of the New Testament, on this subject, to be interpreted in the light of Church history? I reply, certainly it should; and I have attempted so to interpret it in this Essay; but there are two things which it is essential to keep in view:—that no legislative authority attaches to the proceedings of the ante-Nicene, any more than to the post-Nicene Church; that usages are not proved to be Apostolic and Divine, simply because they obtained in the third, or even the second century; and that a distinction must be made between *normal* and *abnormal* developments; between those practices which are legitimate outgrowths of Scripture principles, and those which are the results of innovations upon divinely-authorized methods. With this understanding, it is wise to study Scripture in the light of history. The effect will be instructive, stimulating, and cautionary;—*Instructive*; for we shall trace what will explain and illustrate primitive precedents; we shall see forms and usages instituted by Apostles, perpetuated through after ages in altered circumstances—a fact which corroborates the conviction, that they were not of transient utility, but of enduring worth:—*Stimulating*; for we shall find, that the Churches near to Apostolic times, and largely conformed to Apostolic examples, were as vigorous and efficient in their work of Christianizing the heathen population around them, as they were simple in their piety, and self-sacrificing in their spirit:—and *Cautionary*; for in later times, when innovations had crept in, had become developed, and had been stereotyped by tradition, we meet on every page of history, with proofs of the mischievous results which followed.

And now having cleared the ground, it is time to ask, In what way are we to estimate the principles of the New Testament, and apply them to the age in which we live?

The old Puritans laid down the position, that "The Word of God containeth the direction of all things pertaining to the Church, yea, of whatsoever things can fall into any part of man's life."* This is one of those unguarded positions into which ardent minds are betrayed by a blind consistency. The Puritans, indeed, adopted a principle which lies at the foundation of Protestantism—the sufficiency of Scripture; but in answering the question, "Sufficient for what?" although at times speaking cautiously, at other times they pledged themselves to this rash answer, "Sufficient for all things." "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin; but faith is not but in respect of the Word of God; therefore whatsoever is not done by the Word of God, is sin."* Then rejoined their opponents, "To take up a straw," without warrant from the Word of God, is sin. With logical consistency, equally honest and simple, they rashly admitted that—"The sentence of the Apostle reacheth even to the taking up a straw."† Added explanations took off the edge of the absurdity, but the position was unwise and untenable; consequently Hooker, immortally renowned as the "judicious," assailed this weak point, and triumphantly drove his antagonists from their outpost of defence. He incontestably demonstrates that reason is a Divine gift, and that it speaks where Scripture is silent. Yet the ecclesiastical principle which the Puritans meant to cover and defend—the principle of the authority and unchangeableness of a revealed Church polity—Hooker substantially admits. He does not, like his antagonists, believe that the revelation came of necessity, but he allows that it came by special favour or grace. He does not believe it to be perfect and complete, so as to supply directions in all exigencies; but he does admit "the precepts that Scripture setteth down are not few, and the examples

* Cartwright's Reply, p. 14.

† Second Reply, p. 60.

many, which it proposeth for all Church governors even in particularities to follow." * And although this deep thinker sometimes talks perilously of altering Christ's laws, he says :—" In the matter of external discipline, or regiment itself, we do not deny but there are some things whereto the Church is bound till the world's end." † And again, he maintains, " Our constant persuasion is, that we have no where altered the laws of Christ, further than in such particularities only as have the nature of things changeable, according to the difference of times, places, persons, and other the like circumstances." He adds: " Whatsoever Christ hath commanded for ever to be kept in His Church, the same we take not upon us to abrogate." ‡ Hooker arrived at conclusions differing from those which are expressed in this Essay respecting what the Scriptures teach as to Church polity; but the general maxims which he propounds, before he enters upon details in the latter part of his great work, are, on the whole, such as may be consistently adopted by Congregationalists. I have referred to Hooker because of his great authority with Churchmen, and an appeal to his reasonings will, with such persons, prove much more satisfactory than any arguments which might be produced by one like myself; and because an original discussion of the subject would involve deeper inquiries into the grounds and reasons of ecclesiastical law, than within the compass of this Essay it is possible to undertake. §

To adopt the quaint language of a distinguished Puritan :—In the Scripture there is not only what covers the Church's nakedness, but there are also " chains, and

* Eccl. Pol., book III. chap. iv., also chap. xi.; Keble's ed. I. p. 452.

† Ibid.; book III. chap. xi.; Keble, I. p. 512.

‡ Ibid., book III. chap. xi.; Keble, I. p. 513.

§ *Vide* the first book of the Eccl. Polity. How profound is the remark :—" Easier a great deal is it for men by law to be taught what they ought to do than instructed how to judge as they should do of law, the one being a thing which belongeth generally unto all; the other, such as none but the wiser and more judicious sort can perform."—Chap. xvi.

bracelets, and rings, and other jewels to adorn her and set her out." Not only sufficient to quench her thirst and kill her hunger, but much also to minister "a more delicious and dainty diet." *

What amount of ecclesiastical information the New Testament affords we have attempted to determine, and its binding force in a general way is so plain as to be acknowledged by opposite parties.

It would be as unreasonable towards ourselves, as it would be irreverent towards Christ, to speculate or dispute about ideal Churches, without studying as applicable, and obeying as authoritative, the things which we find written in the one Book, which all Christians unite to honour. With the Puritans I feel satisfied, that Christ has laid down ecclesiastical laws for His Church, and that those laws cannot be abrogated; and with Hooker I feel satisfied, that in the interpretation and application of them, enlightened Christian reason, which is a gift no less Divine than the laws themselves, is our counsellor and commentator.

But at this point, we must take care lest, after all, we are not left at sea, without chart or compass. A distinct and clear understanding is requisite as to what we mean by the binding force of the Scriptures in a general way, and by the province of enlightened Christian reason touching this subject.

I venture to suggest the following particulars :—

1. Ends are to be distinguished from means ; the ends being the promulgation of the faith, the perpetuation of the fellowship, and the maintenance of the worship of the Church—confessedly these ends are divinely proposed, they are immutable and everlasting, and all ecclesiastical proceedings whatsoever, must aim at their attainment.

2. Certain primitive means were essential, others only

* Cartwright's Reply, p. 14.

subordinate. The ordinance of preaching ; the appointment of bishops and deacons ; the preservation of morality and religion in Churches by careful discipline ; the confinement of them within such local limits as allow the development of sympathy and the exercise of power ; and a reliance for the temporal support of Christianity upon free-will offerings,—these, regarded in the light of our preceding remarks, are, beyond question, fundamental methods for securing the ecclesiastical purpose indicated in the New Testament. On the other hand, the peculiar arrangements at Jerusalem for assisting the poor (the brethren having all things common, whatever that may mean), appear unessential, and therefore temporary. And other minor matters require to be placed in the same category, without involving any sacrifice of loyalty to Divine legislation.

3. Certain powers of government existed in primitive times necessarily without subsequent parallel. The Apostles were persons in their official relation so completely *sui generis*, that they could not leave behind them perfectly corresponding successors ; and other powers of superintendence and control, such as were exercised by Timothy and Titus, were needful, simply in consequence of the immature and unsettled condition of the Churches which they were appointed to nurture and strengthen.

4. These distinctions are to be borne in mind in applying primitive precedents to ourselves ; whilst we are bound to follow what is fundamental and plain, there can be no obligation to seek conformity to that which is uncertain or incidental. That which from the very nature of the case was confined to the primitive age, renders imitation by us impossible ; and what pertained to particular conditions and exigencies in ancient days, can be repeated only when similar circumstances arise in our own times. For example the *ab extra* office of men

like Timothy and Titus, may require, and does actually find, a rather closely-corresponding parallel in the functions exercised by the superintendents of missionary operations both at home and abroad.

5. In the use of primitive precedents for the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, large allowance must be made for differences of age, of country, and of circumstances; and respecting a variety of matters, a liberal discretion must be exercised, under the control of a jealous regard for the simplicity and the spirituality of the Church of Christ. Moreover, when Scripture is silent on specific points, nothing remains to guide us but its general spirit, according to the judgment of our own reason, enlightened by experience, observation, and history. Yet, in the case of conclusions so reached, and adopted for the sake of order and seemliness, never should they be imposed as essential terms of communion upon any disciples of Christ, who seek the consolation to be derived from the holy ordinances of the Divine Master.

Finally, in working out the development of ecclesiastical principles, we must carefully guard against any development which is abnormal and illegitimate, and in our plans for securing ecclesiastical prosperity, no additions must be made to the primitive model, except such as are in harmony with its genius and spirit. Innovations, decidedly foreign and incongruous, I may observe, were at an early period introduced into Christendom. Some of them might be almost infinitesimal in their origin and first appearance, but they contained germs of error and evil, and through their subsequent growth, and their traditional preservation, flagrant deviations from Christian truth and rectitude at length occurred. History reads us a serious lecture upon the consequences of abnormal developments. For example, the union between Church and State, as it existed during the Middle Ages, no doubt

produced certain social advantages, but it also resulted in enormous disadvantages. To mention nothing else, the power of persecution, as then exercised by the Church, arose entirely from the political connections of Christianity. The Church could destroy the heretic only because it had the magistrate, with sword and fire-brand, at its beck and call. It might have launched its interdicts and frightened kings and people without the help of the civil power; but it could not have burnt, beheaded, or imprisoned its victims. Spiritual despotism became political tyranny when it could wreak its vengeance in blood and flame and incarceration. The mischiefs of the Middle Ages, in this respect, survived the Reformation. But now the days of persecution are past, and it would be unfair to refer to them as illustrative of the working of a State Church in our England of the nineteenth century, with a purer atmosphere of civilization breathed around it than existed at the periods to which I have referred; but they can be justly referred to as illustrative of the effect of the union, when it is carried on with a cruel consistency; nor can we be blind to the social injustice which still, in many ways, is being done to Churches outside the privileged pale. We have now, however, to deal, not with the history of the past, but with institutions existing, and controversies rife, at the present hour.

WHAT, THEN, IS THE BEARING OF THE PRINCIPLES LAID DOWN UPON A GREAT ECCLESIASTICAL CONTROVERSY OF THE PRESENT DAY?

I have hitherto avoided the word *Establishment*, because of the loose and indefinite sense in which it has been often employed, both by Churchmen and Nonconformists. In assault and defence there has been frequently absent a clear conception of the points at issue. So long as the controversy remained in the region of abstract philosophy,

this was not of so much consequence, as it is now that the question has been brought down to an arena of debate, where it demands a practical solution. Subject to the analysis of political criticism, it is found not to be a simple question but a very manifold one. The existing union between Church and State is almost a Gordian knot, but it must never be cut by the stroke of a sword, it requires to be carefully examined, so that the ends of the cord may be discovered,—then the intricate entanglements may be untwisted.

I do not presume to determine all the details involved, but there are some which, in connection with our task, ought to be specified. To facilitate our object they may be classified thus :—Things obtaining amongst us to which the existing union between Church and State is essential ; and things to which this union is not essential, though at present they are identified with it. This distinction is important, and it will presently be seen, that our conclusions from Scripture stand in a different relation to the one class from that in which they stand to the other.

Prominent in the first class is the compulsory support of religion. This is indispensable to the maintenance of our tithe system, or to any legal provision in lieu of it. It is just here that the pinch is felt, when we apply the laws of the New Testament. Let us examine the subject with a little patience.

There is no ground upon which national endowments actually rest but the will of the greater number. This is the rule, but it is one which runs counter to a higher rule. For the Divine law builds a Church only upon the foundation of truth, and invests it with claims derived entirely from its spiritual and Divine position. A true Church, in the sight of God, whether large or small, is entitled to revenue at the hands of willing and devoted members ; but it does not ask for it, and such a Church, if true to its

mission and its God, cannot seek that which is procured simply on the ground of the right of national majorities. I do not forget the distinction between a Church and the national endowment of a Church. A nationally-endowed Church may, as a Church, be based on truth; but the circumstance of its national endowment is not so based; therefore the method of its endowment comes into collision with the basis of its constitution.

A national Church has been defined by an accomplished Prelate * to be not the Church of the majority, but "one which asserts the idea of free national life as against the national despotism of the Papacy." I am at a loss to understand exactly what this sentence means; for it would appear to deny that a Roman Catholic Church can be a national Church at all; it would seem to imply that there is no national Church in France, or in Belgium, or in Austria; and it would further look, as if comprehending an admission, that the functions of a national Church may be efficiently discharged by Protestant Nonconformist communities,—inasmuch as they are loud and distinct in affirming that highly-prized Protestant idea which the writer so eloquently describes. But the definition does not touch the question of the national endowment of a Church, let that Church be what it may. A Church perfectly and nobly national cannot be in the possession of national endowments, without the consent of the majority of the nation. Whenever that consent comes to be withdrawn, whenever in this country, Parliament, which is an expression of the majority, pronounces a judgment adverse to the continued national endowment of any ecclesiastical organization, that endowment must of necessity cease. The advocates of Establishments have again and again acknowledged the anomalous position of a Church poli-

* Bishop of Peterborough, in an article contributed by him, when Dean of Cork, to the *Contemporary Review*.

tically patronized, and nationally endowed, whilst its members form but a minority of the population; and we are told that "the idea was familiar to statesmanlike minds, in the last century, though obscured by the supposed political necessity of maintaining Protestant ascendancy." *

Even if the theory be adopted that the State has a conscience, and consequently is bound to endow truth because it is truth, the practice in the end comes to be that the endowment follows the law of numbers. The conscience of the State must be the conscience of those who are most numerous in the State; and that conscience, whether ill or well informed, whether blind or enlightened, must dictate the form of opinion to be supported by law. Thus in any case, the decision, as to the object of endowment, must ultimately hinge on a numerical inquiry; it must be so even where it is certain that a vast multitude affecting the decision know little or nothing of Christianity, and where they do not in any practical form profess it, nay, where a large proportion deny it altogether.

The theory will not bear examination. It is one of those dreams which have an enchantment for noble minds, but which when they come to be applied to existing circumstances, exhale and vanish like tinted clouds. And here let me add, in passing,—the theory is ignored or repudiated by many Churchmen themselves; and in connection with this fact it is very remarkable, that the ablest advocates of Establishments appreciate lightly the value of dogmatic truth, whilst the ablest advocates of dogmatic truth indicate sympathies with voluntaryism, or are its avowed advocates. The prevailing currents of opinion and feeling seem to show, on the one side, that the English Establishment, should it remain, by being modified, or by being reconstructed, according to the advanced

* Times, July 24, 1869.

spirit of the age, will become more and more latitudinarian, and will give up old distinctive dogmas ;—and on the other side, that faith in doctrinal Christianity will be left to be embodied in voluntary Churches, they evidently having the strongest sympathy with it. That is a significant passage in which Keble says to Sir J. Coleridge : “ My dream,” (the poet had imagined a restoration of discipline,) “ if it went on and found that nothing could be done, would be a very frightful one ; for it would exhibit our Church in no long time reduced to the alternative of voluntaryism or unbelief.”* It would look as if a State Church could not stand consistently with faith in dogmatic truth ; and as if voluntary Churches could not stand without such faith. As a matter of fact, it is incontestable, that the degree of vitality, force and prosperity, in voluntary Churches at the present day, is in a ratio with the importance which they attach to the positive and distinctive truths of the Gospel of Christ.

The argument respecting the rights of truth as bearing on a compulsory method of supporting religion is re-enforced by another. To pass from primitive voluntaryism to the present tithe system, or any legal equivalent, is completely to change the law of revenue. Should it be said, that the two methods may be combined, I reply, that although the compulsory method may be supplemented by the voluntary, yet the voluntary principle rightly understood, steadily pursued and consistently maintained, shows itself to be utterly alien from its opposite ; and that whilst it graciously and from charity helps its antagonist, it does so under protest against all compulsion in religion, as alike unjust, ungenerous, and inexpedient. Force and freedom can never cordially embrace each other, can never consistently work side by side.

Nor is the New Testament wanting in a condemnation

* Coleridge's *Life of Keble*.

of all compulsory action in Christian service. "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight," is a passage, which may sometimes in this controversy have been stretched beyond its legitimate meaning; but can any one think it misapplied, when used as an argument against collecting Church revenues, after the manner in which the revenues of Cæsar are collected? It has been said, "that a compulsory support by the State displaces a Divine ordinance, and sets up in its room a corrupt invention of men;" and to this a reply has been attempted in the form of a question:—"Is it a sinful departure from the primitive model, when British Christians use the ships, the science and the power of our country to spread the Gospel among the heathen, because those means were not employed in the first propagation."* A moment's reflection shows that the cases are not at all parallel, for in the case of an Establishment, there is a change of ecclesiastical principle; whereas in the case of the application of modern discoveries to missionary purposes, there is no change of ecclesiastical principle whatever: hence the charge brought against the transition from voluntarism to compulsion in the fiscal law of Christianity remains untouched.

Moreover, any Church, accepting national endowments, must thereby be placed in a different relation to the State from voluntary Churches, and consequently must incur some political restriction of its ecclesiastical proceedings. It is strange that all intelligent men do not perceive this. Mr. Joyce, after describing the state of the law in America, with regard to the free Episcopal Church of that country, adds: "It is here worthy of observation, that the principle of equal justice is also adopted in this country with respect to all religious bodies whatever, except one. That solitary exception is remarkable, being

* Birks' Church and State.

none other than the Church of England."* Of course. Whether the treatment which the Church of England receives from the highest courts in the country be just or unjust, I do not presume to determine; but that the law of England must ever treat a Church established and endowed by the State differently from what it does a Church not so endowed, and that it will withdraw a portion of liberty in exchange for State patronage, national property, and exclusive position, seems so exceedingly plain, that it is wonderful indeed, when any one with a practical mind does not see it in a moment.

In the Church and State system, with compulsion is connected patronage. The patronage of the Crown in the nomination of bishops, which in spite of the *Congé d'élire*, is really a royal appointment, their high social position and their title to seats in Parliament—whatever the legal nature of that title—are not essential to a system such as political philosophers may create; but these arrangements are essential to the system as it now exists, and assuredly the system is essential to them. They have come down from ancient times, and not only are they venerable for their antiquity, but they have gathered round them almost august associations. The names of noble kings and princes and prelates are twined about the double Institution. It is almost dangerous for Nonconformists, with certain tastes, to walk through our abbeys and cathedrals, and to come under the spell of that romance which encircles crown and mitre; or to ponder certain pages of our English annals, in which names of illustrious ecclesiastical statesmen are prominent; yet here the shadows are as conspicuous as the lights, and such Nonconformists, in spite of all enchantments, are compelled to pronounce this sort of connection between Crown and Church as utterly opposed to primitive precedent and primitive principle.

* "The Civil power in its relation to the Church."

For whatever differences of opinion may exist as to those in whom lay the power of appointing bishops in the earliest times, no one dreams that it rested in the hands of Cæsar. It must have belonged either to the people or to the Apostles. Churches constructed on the original plan, could not have accepted bishops sent them by secular rulers, even if those rulers had been Christians; because to do so would have been utterly inconsistent with the voluntaryism and the independency of those spiritual communities. To adopt the State principle now, must be a departure from the principles maintained then. Arguments specious in their nature may be skilfully employed to show that Churches ought to be national, and that kings and princes, as the heads of Christian nations, ought to elect their chief ministers; but, beyond dispute, the practice lies quite outside the teaching of the inspired founders of Christianity, and when adopted, compels a departure from their practice and example.

It is not astonishing that the simple conversion of sovereigns to the Christian faith should be unnoticed prophetically or otherwise, in the New Testament, because no distinctions of society are recognizable in the spiritual change of the new birth; but it is astonishing that nothing is said of their official relation to the Church, if they were divinely destined and authorized to be what they have subsequently become. It is idle to urge that there were no *Christian* rulers in the days of the Apostles. There was no Israelitish king contemporary with Moses, yet the occurrence of such a magistrate is anticipated and provided for in the Book of Deuteronomy.*

Crown patronage extends much further than to the appointment of bishops, and, in common with it, lay impropriation lies open to manifest objections drawn from the

* For a reply to the objections of De Wette and others to the Mosaic authorship of this portion of Deuteronomy, I must refer to Hävernicks and Keil, and to Davidson's Introduction (1856), p. 610.

consideration of primitive Institutes. Both involve the usurpation of those congregational rights which are recognized in the Scriptures. The right of presentation, if it appears an advantage on one side, is manifestly a disadvantage on another. If it bestow independence upon an incumbent, it inflicts the opposite upon a people. They have no voice in the selection of their instructor. They must submit to his teaching, however contrary it may be to the Word of God, and to their own conscientious convictions. Much is said of the freedom of clergymen so inducted ; but such freedom for a clergyman is really the bondage of his parishioners. Moreover, lay impropriation is, in practice, often connected with persons and proceedings which make all good State Churchmen blush. Who can endure to think of the character of some lay patrons, or of the selling advowsons, even when not tainted, as is often the case, with spots of simony ?

Pursuing the classification suggested, first of things to which the existing union of Church and State is essential ; and next of things to which, though now identified with that union, it is not essential ; I must briefly touch on the latter.

It is scarcely needful to say that endowments bestowed by the liberality of individuals are fruits of the voluntary principle ; and therefore, the encouragement, the increase, and the preservation of such endowments involve no recognition, in any way, of the Church and State principle.

Less obvious, but no less true, is it, that the power of secular courts to decide disputes respecting pecuniary ecclesiastical interests, only implies the supremacy of the Sovereign over all temporal causes, and concedes no supremacy over those which are purely spiritual. To allow the latter, in any degree, voluntaries would deem disloyalty to the Lord Christ, the only Lord of conscience ; to allow the former, is, in the judgment of most,

if not all of them, to leave His Crown rights entirely untouched.

Nor, in a state of society where temporal and spiritual matters are, in subtle ways, inextricably interwoven, can the interposition of the State to prevent social oppression, or civil disadvantage, on the part of one Church towards another, or on the part of any Church towards its members, be censured or questioned by thoughtful people, however jealous they may be of any foreign infringement upon moral domains.

The interference of the State also to check abuses in the working of voluntarism, under the influence of superstition, does not appear to me to be inconsistent with the principles I have laid down. Few, I suppose, would wish for the repeal of the Act of Mortmain, which arose from the sagacity of our ancestors, when they felt it necessary, for the well-being of the country, to prevent the threatened absorption of its wealth by ecclesiastical bodies; and cases are still possible, in which the sensibilities of a dying man may be wrought upon to the injury of family interests, the detriment of domestic peace, and the production of mischief through a large social circle. Domestic wrong may spring out of spiritual abuses, and require legislative and legal interference for the public good. Nothing in the New Testament discountenances the exercise of great caution on the part of general society, for the preservation of its rights from the inroads of fanaticism.

For one I am prepared to contend for the maintenance of a Protestant succession to the throne. The reasons for it are furnished not by the religious, but by the political character of Romanism. No particular doctrinal or ecclesiastical opinions ought to exclude a legitimate heir; but a Popish claimant is the subject of another and an ambitious power, which associates temporal with spiritual

authority, which regards the former not as an accident, but as a necessity, which employs assumed prerogatives after a most elastic fashion, and which can contract or expand them with exquisite cunning, as expediency suggests. A Roman Catholic sovereign is trammelled by complications intolerable to a Protestant nation like ours—which has a history full of warning against the permission of any foreign interference with national proceedings and national life. Amidst the Protestant bigotry of the seventeenth century, it appears to have been a true patriotic instinct which led Lord Russell and others to deprecate, as a terrible calamity, the accession of a Papist to the English throne. Whilst condemning bigotry, we are taught by the story of the past and by the condition of the present, by the annals of our country and by the circumstances of Europe, to guard against the return of Romish intermeddling with English affairs. A burnt child fears the fire ; and the old maxim is quite as good for empires as for individuals. Reactions now, produced by Protestant intolerance in former days, should make us all the more cautious, lest in a fit of blind generosity, mistaken for justice, we open a door of mischief, which, when too late, it would be difficult or impossible to shut. .

The connection of public and national religious ceremonies with Coronations and Royal funerals, with the outbreak of war and the return of peace, with visitations of famine and seasons of plenty, does not require the existence of any political establishment of the Church whatever. For temporal rulers to *impose* religious rites, or even in any way to *command* them, would be going beyond their province; but to recommend them in words, and by example, is simply carrying out the principle that the magistrate is a minister of God for good. A subtle logic can exercise itself in drawing inferences

as fallacious, as they are remote, from the maintenance of the true rights of conscience; but moral sensibilities, which, no less than the gifts of reason, are Divine endowments, and social instincts, which, by God's hand, are rooted in our souls, impel a people, when calamities sweep across the land, to cry for mercy to the Lord of Hosts; and when the sunshine of a loving Providence bursts from behind a cloud, to clasp hands before His throne, and to send up to Heaven shouts of joy and thankfulness.

These and some other things are, in the eyes of some Conformists and some Dissenters, identified with a constitutional union between Church and State, and they are counted by the one party as a Palladium, and by the other as a Trojan horse. To disestablish the Church according to the former, would be to dissipate all endowments; to withdraw wholesome legal restraints from the vagaries of spiritual despotism; to overthrow the Protestant succession; to leave Protestants at the mercy of Roman Catholics; to render national fasts and thanksgivings, and all religious ceremonies in connection with royalty, impossible; and to stamp the Crown and the Senate with the impress of atheism. Nonconformists also may be found who,—esteeming some or all of the arrangements now mentioned, as infringements upon pure religious voluntarism, and, smiling at the fears of their neighbours,—believe that any deficiencies left, by a policy of disestablishment, would be amply supplied by individual religious action. I do not sympathize in the fears of State Churchmen, because I do not believe that union between Church and State is at all essential to some of the provisions and safeguards which they so highly value. Nor do I adopt the extreme opinions of some voluntaries, because I cannot see that the arrangements, which I have ventured to approve, are at variance with the liberties of Christian Churches, or with the rights of human conscience.

We are often solemnly reminded, by the advocates of an Establishment, that it is the duty of the State to acknowledge the Almighty, and of rulers to believe the Gospel, and of the nation to promote the prosperity of the Church of Christ as far as possible; and by insisting upon these obvious truths, some intelligent men really imagine that they are settling the controversy between voluntaries and themselves. What Christian denies, what Nonconformist doubts, these first principles of social Christian duty? The only question is: When a nation and its rulers have embraced the religion of the New Testament, how are they to advance its prosperity? Are they to do it by supporting an Establishment like our own, with its political complications, its compulsory support of the Church, its methods of clerical and episcopal appointment, and its unrighteous depreciation of unestablished and unendowed denominations? It is useless to talk of an Establishment *in nubibus*. Our debates must refer to the Establishment on *terra firma*; any fundamental change in which would be resisted by the theorists themselves with invincible obstinacy. With reference to that which is the gist of the question, it may be replied, that the things now pointed out, as those to which an Establishment is essential, are inconsistent with the Gospel, and are also injurious to Christianity—harming that which they are intended to help, and, however well intentioned, most unwisely done. On the other hand, the things which I have indicated as capable of being maintained without any Establishment, together with the employment of means, to which the principle of an Establishment is antagonistic—in other words, the voluntary religious action of rulers, combined with the voluntary religious action of the ruled, would effectually secure all the ends which devout advocates of a Church and State system propose or desire.*

* Whilst I am writing these lines the question of Establishment is being decided by the

IT REMAINS TO INQUIRE TO WHAT EXTENT MAY THE PRINCIPLES ILLUSTRATED BE FOUND IN OPERATION AMONGST THE CHURCHES OF OUR OWN COUNTRY.

1. Congregationalists, including Independents and Baptists, regard their Churches as close approximations to original Christian Institutes. They profess to bow to Scripture authority upon all ecclesiastical as well as all theological questions; and where Scripture supplies no formal directions, to fall back for guidance, upon the spiritual nature of Christianity. They believe that Churches are formed for the maintaining of truth, and for the edifying of believers; fellowship being based upon common faith, and a common range of spiritual sympathy. It is a fellowship of religious life, experience, and action. Care is employed in the admission of members, lest persons should intrude themselves with mistaken views, or for improper ends. Discipline is exercised, and in cases of immorality, delinquents are forbidden to receive the Lord's Supper. Upon proofs of repentance such persons are restored. Bishops and deacons are popularly elected. Each Church is complete in itself, and independent of others; nevertheless, County Associations and National Unions, are formed for conference, counsel, and co-operation. Both the denominations specified are opposed to a hierarchy, to an official priesthood as distinguished from the priesthood of all the faithful, and to what is generally meant by Ritualism in

(July, 1869) Parliament of England. The protest of certain Lords is doubtless true; the Irish Bill "for the first time, since the foundation of the British Monarchy, introduces, so far as Ireland is concerned, the principle unrecognized in any other country in Europe, of an entire severance of the State from the support of any and every form of religious worship." And the jubilation of the triumphant statesman is warranted by facts. "The disestablishment of the Church," says Mr. Gladstone, "is complete. The words, 'Royal Supremacy,' 'Church and State,' 'Protestant ascendancy,' as connected with the Church and 'national religion,' are now, by the judgment of the House of Lords, not less than the House of Commons, nothing but the notes and traces of a buried controversy. Even the last shadow of Establishment, if it were one—the existence of Irish bishops with seats in the House of Lords—has disappeared."

The principle of an Establishment is surrendered by the nation and the Senate, and the future destiny of State Churches in the British Empire is left to the effect of time and circumstances.

worship. They protest against every method of supporting religion, except that which is voluntary.

These principles, generally considered, are in harmony with the ideas of primitive Churches, conveyed in the first part of this Essay. How far practice is in conformity with these principles, and how far the principles, as sometimes expounded, come up to the ideal which is acknowledged and upheld, is another question:—principles, and the organized systems into which they are wrought, are not identical; and with certain general principles different particular opinions may be connected.

It would be beside the mark to enter fully into this complicated subject, but since I do not assume the function of a special pleader for English Congregationalism as it is—since I wish to be, if not a disinterested, at least an honest critic—I may be permitted to remark, that it appears to me that Ecclesiastical principles of Divine authority have been decidedly seized, but not thoroughly grasped by Congregationalists; that with attainments reached, there are defects betrayed.

Holding, as I do, what for brevity's sake may be termed the theory of the municipal limits of Churches; the practice of constituting several perfectly distinct societies in the same city or town, when all the members of those societies could easily worship together, has, for many years, appeared to my mind to be a departure from New Testament precedents. Whether the exact limits of a primitive Church should be reckoned amongst essential, or circumstantial elements of ecclesiastical polity, may be open to debate; that we are not required to adhere to a strictly municipal boundary for the range of local communities, may be readily granted; but, if it be an essential principle, that no one Church should be co-extensive with the nation, it cannot be denied to be an essential principle, that Churches are legitimately incapable of

indefinite divisibility. If we recognize as a Divine law the principle which checks the territorial extension of each society, why should we deny the character of a law to that principle which checks its territorial diminution? We have no more right to set aside the principle when it operates in one direction than when it operates in another. Besides this—conformity to the primitive custom, in the latter as well as in the former respect, is commended by an enlightened expediency: the conclusions of human reason on this point, as on so many others, enforce the application of the Divine precedent. For I am quite sure, from long experience, with considerable opportunities for observation, that unchecked divisibility is working disastrously to the interests of religion. It creates rivalries. It promotes alienation. It entails feebleness. It occasions the impoverishment of pastors. It wastes time and strength, which, husbanded and employed in a large society, might secure results the most beneficial.

Moreover, partly through this practice, which proceeds upon a false or defective principle, but much more through forgetfulness or misapprehension of other principles, or most of all through inconsistency between practice and principle,—Congregationalists sometimes lay themselves open to blame. Isolation, sectarianism, and schism are evils. That Independency alone, unguarded by other considerations which are as Divine as itself, has a tendency to produce such evils, none will deny. As well deny that the centrifugal force, apart from the centripetal, has a tendency to break up the solar system, and to drive off the planetary bodies into eccentric and lonely paths. New Testament principles taken altogether will effectually prevent mischief, causing Churches to move together in order and unity, and to march to the music of truth and love. But, to change the figure, Indepen-

dency, cut off from the parent stock of truth, and engrafted upon human nature, as we often find it, is likely to produce "very sour crabs." The danger of fostering a sectarian spirit, of hemming sympathies within narrow bounds, is imminent, if people do not carefully blend in their minds, with an idea of the limited extent, and the self-contained character of distinct Congregational societies, other ideas, which are of equal moment and of equal authority. Churches, though complete in themselves, are not to live *in* and *for* themselves. Selfishness, whether in individuals or societies, is an abomination to Christ. Distinct "religious interests," as they are sometimes called—if the hateful phraseology be literally understood, as facts, in some cases, show that it must be—are utterly opposed to Divine law, and Divine love.

Further, all true Churches are divinely related to the world. Patriotism is their duty. They cannot be indifferent to politics. Their field is the world, and it is their business to sow the earth with "the good seed of the kingdom." It is unfortunate that controversy has driven some to overlook the position of the Christian Church as to the institutions, the laws, and the well-being of the nation; and it is idle, with the history of new England before us, to deny that Congregationalism can give a tone to national life. I must confess that I cannot regard the State simply as political and economical—a nation is not a mere aggregate of human bodies, it is a congregation of human souls, and as such it stands in a moral and spiritual position towards God, religion, and the Church. I believe in the possibility of a Christian State without an Established Church. So far as England is, or ever can be, a Christian State, it must be so through the common worship of Almighty God, the holiness of national life, the justice of law, the equity of government, the mercy which tempers justice, the honesty of commerce, the

purity of literature, the humility of science, and the nobleness of art:—and in the promotion of these ends, every Church is competent to take its share. Perhaps the majority of religious people in Great Britain and Ireland at the present day are connected with voluntary denominations, and all of them are able, and all of them are required, to help in the true Christianization of the whole State; nor is there room to doubt, that, if the whole population were to imbibe the voluntary sentiment to-morrow, instead of diminishing, it would increase the efficiency of godly men, in their endeavours to improve the character and tone of national life.

Schism is an ugly word, rudely flung in the faces of Nonconformists. The natural result is, that in defending themselves against a false accusation, they shut their eyes to a true one. Nonconformity is, in its essence, no more schismatic than is Protestantism. It is an unfortunate circumstance that negative terms should be used to denote two great religious movements, full of positive faith and feeling, both distinguished by a tenacious hold of Scripture truth; both based upon an intense experience of spiritual life. *Protestantism* and *Nonconformity* are terms which point simply to the utterance of a controversial *No*; whereas each of these powers is the expression of a calm and edifying *Yes*. The principles of Nonconformity, taken as a whole, do not merely pull down: they build up. They do not make rents in the Church; they are rather fitted to repair them. Circumstances have given these terms a negative bearing, but naturally they are inspired with positive force. Yet Independency and the right of private judgment, isolated from the system of truth, of which they are a part, and only a part, have a tendency to rend in twain what ought ever to be kept intact; and the upholders of Nonconformity can, and sometimes do, by their wilfulness and obstinacy, become

really schismatical. I am fully persuaded, that for persons to separate and divide, not on doctrinal and ecclesiastical grounds, not from unmanageable numbers; but from personal disputes, from party feeling, and from mutual misunderstanding, is, to all intents and purposes, to make a rent in Christ's body. It is a violation of His law, an insult to His love, a grief to His Spirit. Nothing could be more salutary and bracing to Congregationalism, than the maintenance amongst its upholders, of a strong public opinion against the evils now pointed out, and against such proceedings as naturally tend to produce them.

With a wish to be as practical as the scope and limits of this Essay will allow, I would add, that there are certain other weak points in our organizations and practices for which our principles are not responsible. Power pecuniary, social, intellectual, and spiritual, existing in our Churches is not, to adopt a current phrase, adequately *utilized*. Strength amongst us often lies unemployed, and runs to waste. Existing societies, and methods of working, in connection with Free Churches, whether by schools, district visitation, or the like, do not exhaust available resources. The temporal wants of the poor and the sick, not merely such as are identified with our communities, but such as lie in the moral wastes reaching up to our very doors; the intellectual and social wants of large numbers in the same position; and the political aspirations of multitudes, needing to be educated and guided in the use of rights for which they crave, require from us, in common with all Christian men, far more attention than they have ever yet received. The time, too, is come for pious people, particularly pious women, to combine almsdeeds with almsgiving; and not only in Dorcas Societies to make garments for the poor, but as individuals, by wise, kindly, and genial

intercourse, to teach ignorant and inexperienced heads of families, how in a hundred little ways they may help themselves.

Other objects, scarcely ever noticed by some good men, require attention. Books and periodicals, directly or indirectly illustrating the principles of Free Churches, and productions by Nonconformists, defending or interpreting the common faith, have scant justice done them by co-religionists, unless such productions be of a popular kind. Besides College Professors, there are other Congregational ministers, especially some of the younger, who are sound scholars and deep thinkers, qualified, if they had time and means, greatly to enrich our national literature. But Independency has no spheres, except pastoral ones, in which such men can labour and live, and for such spheres these men are not well fitted. Might not fellowships be endowed to help these gifted spirits to do the kind of work which God has formed them to accomplish? Necessities, in reference to matters of this description, force themselves just now upon Nonconformists, and will before long secure practical consideration, if Nonconformists be wise.

2. It is a great mistake to suppose that Congregationalists are the only persons contributing to realize the Divine ideal, or that the intelligent amongst them imagine this to be the case. Any such supposition on the part of a religious community in this imperfect state of existence, is a prejudice belonging to a fifth class of idols, which may be added to those of the *tribe*, the *den*, the *market*, and the *theatre*. It is an idol of the Church, and it becomes enthroned, and receives worship wherever a Church falls into self-conceit, and sectarian bigotry. Protestant Nonconformists, of other denominations, Presbyterian and Wesleyan, may be, and often are, just as staunch and ardent voluntaries as Congrega-

tionalists can be, and in many respects they frame their organizations according to Scripture rules. Their Churches recognize certain theological truths; their ministers are placed on terms of official equality; their fellowship depends upon the sympathies of spiritual experience, and by the last-named class of Christians fellowship is carried beyond that of any other community.

3. Parts of the New Testament ideal also find modern representation amongst those who are regarded by Nonconformists as having in some respects most widely departed from it. What Congregationalists endeavour to reduce to practice, Episcopalians maintain in theory, when in the Articles they define a Church as "a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite of the same." The importance of discipline, too, is theoretically admitted; and there are longings for its exercise, and occasional attempts to secure it more or less wise, which bear witness to the hold of the principle upon Christian consciences. Even popular elections of pastors are not unknown amongst Episcopalians; and something like homage is done to the right of the Church to elect its own officers, even in the formal but fruitless writ of a *Congé d'élire*. Large scope is allowed by some clergymen for the activities and wants of religious life; social meetings for religious edification, similar to those existing among some Nonconformists, have been countenanced by distinguished and zealous incumbents; and every one is aware of the vigorous endeavours made to introduce a lay element into recognized modes of ecclesiastical conference and operation.* These are modern representations of primitive principles and sentiments, and they have much significance.

* The discussions at the Liverpool Congress, and what is now going on in Ireland, illustrate this.

The progress of voluntary efforts in the Established Church is another instance in which primitive usage is followed, and it is an instance which requires special attention. Compare the days of Queen Anne with the days of Queen Victoria. Fifty new Churches after the fire of London, had been, by Act of Parliament, ordered to be built, when in the tenth year of Queen Anne another Act was passed for the building of fifty more, to redress, as stated in a subsequent commission, "the inconvenience and growing mischiefs which resulted from the increase of Dissenters and Popery." After the completion of the edifices, erected by virtue of such legislation, there followed a long pause of neglect and indifference; and from the beginning almost to the end of the reign of George III. not six Churches were erected in London. Such was the supply of spiritual wants made by the State. Contrast with this, what has been accomplished during the last twenty or thirty years. Voluntaryism in the Establishment has done much to supply the States' lack of service. It is remarkable that the efficiency of the Church of England, of late years, has arisen not from its State alliance, its State endowments, the patronage of the Crown, and the influence of Prelates in the House of Lords, but from proceedings similar to those of ancient Christianity, and modern Nonconformity. Witness the fund instituted by the Bishop of London, and other movements of a similar description. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have challenged the Church, offering £150,000 to meet equal private benefactions for the augmentation of poor livings; and the result is the voluntary contribution of more than £300,000 in one year. Statistics, upon which we have not room to enter, are at hand to show the wonderful progress of voluntaryism in the Establishment.*

* The power of the voluntary principle is exemplified in the efforts of our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. To apply our ecclesiastical beliefs to the criticism of their Church theory would lead us into a controversy foreign to our object.

It is curious to place these facts by the side of onslaughts upon "the voluntary ideal," and the vigorous efforts made to preserve an Establishment, as the great safeguard and support of religion. "Too much of the voluntaryism of the day," we are told, "is an application to worship of that devil's gospel of modern plutonomy, which resolves all right and wrong, all happiness and misery, into a mere question of supply and demand." To say this, is utterly unfair. There may be some who make the voluntary principle an excuse for buttoning up their pockets, and for asking "Why should I pay for any other worship than my own?" Selfish people may virtually mean by it "a negation of the social need of worship."* But it is a strange contradiction of facts to maintain or insinuate that it is characteristic of voluntaryism to ignore that social need, when, on the contrary, voluntaryism is everlastingly talking about it, and striving to meet it; often very much to the personal annoyance of State religionists, who, in another mood, ask, as they witness zealous voluntary efforts, "Why this waste?" The same spirit which is one day reproached as selfish, is another day rebuffed as intermeddling.

At all events, public opinion has reached a point which renders hopeless the supply of spiritual wants on the part of the State. What would be thought of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who should include in his budget a good round sum for the building and endowment of new churches? What zealous believer in Establishments dreams of such a thing being attempted? The tide runs the other way, and the most determined enemies of voluntaryism in theory are driven by the force of circumstances to adopt it in practice; and it is strange policy—to say no more—for those who are totally dependent on voluntaryism for missionary efforts at home and abroad,

* *Vide Contemporary Review*, vol. ix. 572.

to undervalue its power, and vilify its character. I am by no means a blind eulogist of British voluntaryism. It is often defective for want of means, for want of motives, and for want of wisdom. It is sometimes accompanied by rashness and by waste. But all this leaves the heart of the principle untainted, and the authority of it untouched. It remains the only source of support known in the New Testament,—the one law of revenue upon which Apostles ventured the permanent subsistence of the Church.

It may not be amiss here to remark that two currents of sentiment are, at this moment, running in opposite directions, both of them composed of mingled waters. The current of voluntaryism consists, mainly, I believe, in a devout and intelligent desire to purify and invigorate the Church of Christ, to render her independent of the world, and to bind her heart more closely to her Heavenly Lord. With this nobler impulse no doubt there are others mixed. Men of spiritually despotic views and aims, who wish ecclesiastically to enslave mankind, and men who hate religion as mere superstition, and would gladly sweep it from off the face of the earth, do sometimes join in assailing Establishments, and this is turned into a reproach against voluntaryism. But it should be remembered, on the other hand, when we turn to examine the opposite strong current of feeling in the present day, that whilst pure-minded men, anxious for the highest welfare of Christendom, support Establishments, under the idea of their being bulwarks against fanaticism and infidelity, others lay hands upon the ark to hold it up, simply as an engine of State policy, or as a coffer of wealth for a favoured few. At the best, they take part in the settlement of Church questions as merely “a compromise of parties, to secure a more or less approximate justice in the application of funds.” The advocates of Establish-

ments must see that their forces, certainly not less than those on the opposite side, are of a mixed description. But the motives of men on both sides must be put out of sight, and we ought to judge of the two conflicting ecclesiastical principles upon intrinsic grounds.

In drawing towards a conclusion, may I be permitted to remark that the history of voluntarism during the last two centuries presents a series of facts, unprecedented since the conversion of Constantine. At the period of the Restoration, the Established Church appeared triumphant, an immense majority shouted in its favour, amidst a political excitement, which, even in our most feverish seasons of agitation, it is difficult to conceive. Nonconformity of all kinds was driven into holes and corners, and its total extinction became an object of anticipation close at hand. But instead of extinction behold progress,—steady, persistent progress, in spite of all sorts of political and social opposition, and with nothing to support the despised communities except the maligned energies upon which they rely. And now at the close of a period—short in the estimation of an historical inquirer—British and Irish Churches, free from the control, and independent of the support of the State, number amongst their adherents a decided majority.

Finally, may I ask whether the time be not come for State Churchmen to consider more dispassionately the questions at issue between themselves and Nonconformists. Is it any fairer for them to charge their brethren with spoliation and robbery, or with envy and jealousy, or with hereditary blindness, or with ignorance, or with an incapacity to apprehend reasoning, or with narrowness, bitterness, and want of candour, than it is for their brethren to charge them with corresponding faults? Many State Churchmen are actually adopting the practices,

if not the principles, of those whom they misrepresent or misapprehend. They are forming voluntary associations, raising voluntary funds, and doing many things after a manner, which of old would have shocked the Anglican, and filled the Puritan with joy. Some modern religious movements, redounding to the honour of Churchmen, would have aroused the anger of Whitgift, of Laud, and of Sheldon; and would have won the sympathy of Cartwright, Calamy, Baxter, and Owen. This makes it manifest that there is a practical approach in the Church now towards the usages of those, who formerly were deemed the enemies of all Churchmen. Should not this circumstance at least induce a disposition frankly, and without prejudice, to regard the ecclesiastical controversies of the day? And should not the members of that denomination which is established and endowed in this country be more generally ready to acquaint themselves with the principles and proceedings of their Christian brethren of other names? Many are wisely seeking information upon a subject which so obviously calls for their close attention, but many more are content to remain ignorant of what is being professed and achieved by their fellow citizens living next door to them—thus betraying a kind and an amount of indifference, which can only be paralleled by the perfect unconcern of the upper classes in the Roman Empire to the early progress of Christianity, as it spread day by day amongst their neighbours, and under the very shadow of their own house-roofs.

Human nature is made responsible for very bad things, and it may be deemed Quixotic to expect any good from that quarter. Some who deny the doctrine of its depravity have, notwithstanding, the worst conceptions of mankind. Yet, after all, do we really wander into a fool's paradise, when we hope for a better spirit in the treatment of religious controversy, and in the relations of ecclesiastical

parties? Is there to be everlastingly a life and death quarrel between one denomination of Christian Englishmen and another, instead of a manly and patriotic application of mind and heart to practical problems, pressing for solution with increasing earnestness day by day? Conscience and interest point in the same direction. Nobody can deny that we ought to turn over a new leaf, and putting aside recrimination, to look at the immensely important subjects before us, in the sight of God, and in the spirit of charity. History shows the mischief of dogged resistance to change, and of the resentments which that resistance enkindles. It shows what may be feared from obstinate conservatism on the one side, and from fanatical revolution on the other.

The references to the 15th chapter of Acts, on page 17, are of course from the Authorized Version. With regard to the 23rd verse, it should be observed that in the Vatican, the Alexandrian and the Sinaitic MSS., the words *καὶ οἱ* between "elders" and "brethren" are omitted. According to that reading, the word "brethren" would not denote the members of the Church in general, as distinguished from the elders, and as uniting in the letter, but would describe the elders, who in this act joined the Apostles, as being brethren. Neander and Alford observe, that such an omission could scarcely have arisen from any hierarchical consideration, seeing that it occurs as early as the time of Irenæus, and that it would be against any strong hierarchical view to call the presbyters brethren. Alford thinks the addition of the *καὶ οἱ* arose from a wish to bring the salutation of the letter into accordance with the description in the 4th and 22nd verses. In any case, the omission in the MSS. mentioned, does not touch the historical argument in the Essay, that the people took part with the Apostles and elders in the primitive Conference at Jerusalem.

I may add, that Scholz and Tischendorf (Ed. 1839) retain *καὶ οἱ* in the text.

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

REGARDED IN

ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

BY THE

REV. J. RADFORD THOMSON, M.A.

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH

REGARDED IN ITS HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE Church, as a Divine society, originated in the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples on the day of Pentecost. As a human institution, it shaped itself, under the guidance of the inspired Apostles, according to the circumstances in which it arose and grew. When no longer under the superintendence of the Apostles, its outward form was governed by the principles and the wisdom of its members, who, doubtless, were more or less influenced by the primitive models.

There is ambiguity in the word Church corresponding with the several meanings attached by New Testament writers to the term *ἐκκλησία*, and indeed extending beyond these limits. Our Lord and His Apostles use the word to designate the whole fellowship of the faithful and holy throughout all places and ages.* This is emphatically *the* Church, called by Protestant theologians, "Catholic" and "invisible," as comprising all spiritual Christians, but as known in all its extent to the Omniscient eye alone. The word is also employed in the New Testament as the common name of Christian societies, formed in certain places, and associated for worship, edification, and mission work. In whatsoever place the

* Matt. xvi. 18; Eph. v. 25-7, &c.

Word of eternal life was preached and received, there was formed A Church or Christian assembly. Such an assembly would meet either in a private house,* or, when more convenient, in some other room hired or granted for the purpose. The usage will appear from a comparison between the opening of the Epistles to the Corinthians, and that of the Epistle to the Galatians. St. Paul writes to "the Church of God which is at Corinth,"† but to "the Churches of Galatia."‡ The one society assembling in one place is "a Church;" the several societies scattered throughout a district are not "a Church," but Churches.

It is maintained by many writers that the word "Church" is used in the New Testament in other senses beside the two now mentioned. Upon one passage an attempt has been made to base an interpretation of the term in question evidently intended to support a foregone conclusion. When our Lord supposes an offender to refuse to "hear the Church," it has been affirmed that He referred to the officers of the Church;§ but to this it is a sufficient reply that what is done through the officers is done by the society; there is no need to assume a special signification for the word in this passage.

Whether the word is ever employed in Scripture to denote a collection of congregations in a city or district, or the aggregate of all existing congregations, is a disputed point. Some Independent controversialists have boldly maintained that, even in such a case as that of the Church at Jerusalem, there was only one congregation of Church members in a city, whilst Presbyterians have insisted upon the extreme improbability that thousands of believers could be brought together into one assembly, and have argued that though there may have been many

* Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2.

† 1 Cor. i. 2; 2 Cor. i. 1. ‡ Gal. i. 2.

§ Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, vol. i. p. 14. Bannerman gives five meanings to the word; Palmer, in his *Lectures on the Church*, also gives five, which nearly coincide with Bannerman's.

congregations, there was only one Church, whose officers (in distinction from the lay-members) met for purposes of deliberation and government. The view which commends itself to our judgment is that in some cases there were several assemblies for ordinary worship and instruction, but that the elders and deacons were officers of the whole society, and that in an aggregate meeting of the community the ultimate power resided.* There is, however, no passage in which the Christian societies throughout a district are designated a Church, as in our modern usage we speak of the Church of England, &c.† Those few texts which have been quoted in favour of the sense of “universal visible Church,” as attaching to the word *ἐκκλησία*, may perhaps be referred to one or other of the two usages which have been admitted. The word “Church” has, however, become so generally used in these last-mentioned senses, that it would be impossible in popular usage to conform to strict New Testament precedent, and in the course of this Essay we may speak of the Church of Africa or France, and we may use the word Church to denote the aggregate of the Christian societies existing upon the earth.

Like all organized human societies, the Churches founded by the Apostles needed officers, whilst the special purpose for which they were instituted rendered necessary in such officers peculiar qualifications. It has been asserted and learnedly maintained that the primitive Christian societies were based in their constitution upon the model of the Jewish synagogue; and however difficult of proof this position may be, it is certain that there was far more correspondence between a Church and a synagogue than between a Church and the Temple-

* “The Epistles of the Apostle Paul give the clearest evidence that all the Christians of one city originally formed one whole Church. Yet we may easily suppose that some parts of the Church, without separating themselves from the whole body and its guidance, held particular meetings in the house of some person whose locality was very suitable, and who acted as the *διδάσκαλος*.”—Neander’s *Planting*, p. 151. *Vide* also Davidson’s *Eccl. Polity*, lect. ii.

† The one apparent exception (Acts ix. 31) is based upon a reading which has certainly strong M.S. support, but is contrary to the usage of the New Testament.

scheme. There was no order of men in the Christian community designated priests (*ιερείς*), and there was, in our opinion, nothing corresponding to the Jewish sacrifice which such persons could have offered. On the other hand, the reading of Scripture, instruction, prayer, and praise; these were common to the synagogue and the Church.* For the very special needs of the infant Church, provision equally special was made by its Head. The first officers were the supernaturally-inspired Apostles, who were endowed with signs corresponding with their authority, and who, whatever credulous superstition may aver, had no successors in office. Charisms, or gifts useful for spiritual ends, were abundantly scattered throughout the primitive Church, and do not seem to have been confined to office-holders. In Apostolic times, however, two orders of officers were universal. First, in point of time, were deacons, if, as is generally believed, the seven appointed at Jerusalem held the same office with the *διάκονοι* of St. Paul's Epistles. Then came the presbyters or bishops (*πρεσβύτεροι, ἐπίσκοποι*), who were the spiritual teachers and rulers of the societies. The qualifications of these officers are described in the pastoral Epistles of St. Paul; their appointment originally seems to have rested with the Apostles and specially-gifted evangelists, evidently—judging from analogy—with the concurrence of the brethren, with whom subsequent elections would naturally remain.

So far, then, as can be learned from the New Testament, the first Churches were societies of faithful and holy, though imperfect men and women, independent of control from without, save from the inspired Apostles during their life-time, meeting under the presidency of

* On the distinction between the words *συναγωγή* and *ἐκκλησία*, *vide* a valuable note in Webster and Wilkinson's Greek Test. on Acts ix. 34. It may be observed that Christianity favoured the multiplicity of the synagogue system, rather than the unity symbolised in the Temple.

their elected officers for spiritual edification, receiving and excluding members upon the principles laid down by the Lord and His Apostles. They strove, with more or less success, to realize the high ideal Divinely revealed, and to accomplish the noble and benevolent purposes for which their fellowship had been instituted.

Let us strive to comprehend how clearly the New Testament writers recognized the distinction between the two senses of the *Ecclesia* which have been alluded to; how grandly they conceived of the glorious society known in its entirety only to the mind of God, and how justly they dealt with those communities which, though bound to aspire to the ideal Church, yet soiled their garments with earthly impurities, and stained them with the blood of earthly warfare.

Christians have found both their justification and their motive in New Testament Scripture for regarding the Church with reverence and with fondness. The Apostle Paul especially has summoned the vast powers of his inspired imagination to depict and present the Church universal in the most dignified and attractive form. It is the spiritual and holy *Temple*,* as the chosen dwelling-place of the Most High, and the scene of His perpetual manifestation, destined to do more than replace the abolished Temple and services of Mount Moriah, and to endure after the fleshly temple of Christ's body had been taken up out of sight.† It is the mystical *Spouse*‡ of the Divine Man, who has loved the Church, and has purified it, that the Bride, holy and without blemish, might be prepared for sacred and spiritual espousals. Nay, as if even this most elevated figure did not adequately set forth the Divine conception of Christ's Church, it is His very *Body*,§ taken up, as it

* 1 Cor. iii. 16; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21.

† *Vide* Bp. Hinds' Three Temples of the One God.

‡ Eph. v. 25-32.

§ 1 Cor. x. 17; Eph. i. 22, 23; iv. 15, 16; Col. i. 18.

were, into His own personality, supplied, guided, and kept in harmonious activity by the exalted, ever-living Head. The first-mentioned of these figures is sanctioned, and may have been suggested, by the words of the Lord Himself, "On this rock will I build my Church;" whilst such sayings as these: "Ye are my friends;" "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" "Abide in me, and I in you," may well have led up, by the intimacy of the relation they assert, to the other unfathomably significant metaphors of the Apostle.

Nor was St. Paul the only one of the inspired exponents of Christian truth who appreciated this ideal and sublime view of the Christian community. St. Peter waxes eloquent when he enters upon this theme, and plies his readers with motives to practical holiness drawn from the lofty and spiritual conception of the Church; they are lively stones wrought into the walls of a spiritual house, a holy and royal priesthood, a holy nation, the people of God.* And the Seer who, as the beloved of the Saviour, was wont to lean on Jesus' breast, and who, when that Saviour had ascended, was admitted to the clearest vision of the unseen and the future, dwells, as might be expected, fondly and poetically, upon the Church, viewed as it appears to ransomed immortals, and to Him who sits upon the throne. Like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he contemplates the Church as the holy city, the new Jerusalem;† and like the Apostle of the Gentiles, he sees in the Church the Bride,‡ the Lamb's wife, attired in the radiant linen of righteousness, and ready for the nuptials of eternity.

It is impossible, however, to overlook the fact that the same Apostles who wrote concerning the Church of the Lord Jesus in so elevated a strain, were thoroughly cognizant of the actual condition of the Christian socie-

* 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9, 10.

† Rev. xxi. 2.

‡ Rev. xix. 7, 8; xxi. 2, 9.

ties then existing, and were by no means blind to the grave faults by which the members of those societies were characterized. The Corinthians were reproached by St. Paul for their "envying, and strife, and divisions." There were those among them, he affirms, who defrauded their brethren; and those who despised him, the Apostle of the Lord, and their own father in the faith. The Lord's Supper was made by some an occasion for selfish and carnal festivities. Nor were grosser sins unknown; the Apostle feared to find among them impenitent fornicators, and he directly charges them with tolerating a case of incest. The Galatians were reproved for forsaking the spiritual religion they had accepted, and for turning again to the weak and beggarly elements of Judaism. St. Paul warns the Philippians, that among the teachers who were to be found in the Churches, there were some who preached Christ of envy and strife, and some who were the enemies of the cross of Christ. In the Church of Thessalonica he censures some as disorderly, and as idle busybodies. From his Epistles to Timothy, especially, it appears that the Apostle expected these imperfections to continue, for he foretells the rise and the partial success of false teachers. The writings of the other Apostles point to the same state of things; St. James denounces the strife, avarice, and oppression that prevailed among the Christianized Hebrews; the admonitions of St. Peter imply the existence of pride and sensuality; the first Epistle of St. John is directed against the already-appearing errors of the Gnostics; and no proof can be more conclusive of the compatibility of the lofty ideal of the Church universal, with a clear perception of actual imperfections, than that which is afforded by the Apocalypse, for the addresses to some of the seven Churches of Asia contain the keenest reproofs of impurity, negligence, and false security.

It would have been well had this distinction, evidently recognized by the Apostles of the Lord, been as clearly and constantly regarded by the leaders and writers of the early Church. The idea of a spiritual society holding the truth in its integrity, living in fellowship with the glorified Redeemer, reflecting upon the world the light of His holiness ;—this is one thing. The fact of a human organization composed of persons imperfect in knowledge and in character, even at their best, and in reality containing hypocrites and deceivers of self as well, and presided over by officers themselves compassed with infirmities ;—this is quite another thing. But to this distinction men have been too often blind : the Church has too often seen only the ideal completeness ; the world has too often contented itself with the faulty and inconsistent reality. Hence many of the vain pretensions of the hierarchy ; hence much of the unbelief and scoffing of the heathen and the philosophers.

The Apostolic Fathers present a view of the composition and government of the Christian Churches very much corresponding with that offered in the New Testament. The genuine first Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians is in reality the letter, not of an individual, but of a community. It opens with language which calls to mind the terms of letters continually passing between our own Congregational Churches of the present day :—“ The Church of God which sojourns at Rome to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” * It is observable that the names of the bishops of the two societies are not even mentioned in the salutation : Clement may have been the penman, but the Church was the sender of the Epistle. There is no trace at all of the subsequent distinction

* 1 Ep. Clem., cap. i.

between the bishop and the presbyter : as is the case in the New Testament, these terms are used convertibly to designate the same officer.* There are only two orders of ministry,—bishops or presbyters, and deacons. “The Apostles,” says Clement, “appointed the first-fruits, having first proved them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should afterwards believe.”† The Corinthians are remonstrated with for having deposed certain holy and blameless ministers from their offices.‡ But Clement assumes no jurisdiction over his correspondents on account of his own official relation to the Church at Rome ; on the contrary, he bases his advice upon the duty of mutual counsel and admonition.§

With the superscription of the Epistle of Clement should be compared that of the encyclical letter of the Church at Smyrna, on the occasion of the martyrdom of Polycarp, their bishop. It runs thus :—“The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna to the Church of God sojourning at Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the holy and Catholic Church in every place.”||

Polycarp’s extant Epistle professes to be from “Polycarp and the presbyters with him to the Church of God sojourning at Philippi.” In it is no mention of three orders of ministry : the duty is affirmed of being “subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ,” and the character and ministrations of these officers are described.¶

The Apostolic Fathers follow the example of the New Testament writers in exhibiting under striking and noble figures the excellence and dignity of the universal Church. Barnabas writes of the spiritual temple :—“Having received the forgiveness of sins, and placed our trust in

* 1 Ep. Clem., cap. xlv.

† Ibid., cap. xlii. *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*, Hefele’s edition is referred to : but where an English translation is given, it is that of Clark’s *Ante-Nicene Library*.

‡ Ibid., cap. xlv.

§ Ibid., cap. lvi.

|| Martyr. S. Polyc.

¶ Ep. Polyc., cap. v., vi.

the name of the Lord, we have become new creatures, formed again from the beginning. Wherefore, in our habitation, God truly dwells in us." * Clement compares the Church to an army serving under its leaders, in which each occupies his proper station and renders his appointed service ; and to a body where every member has its own office.† In the second (spurious) Epistle, the Church is likened to the spouse of Christ. ‡ Hermas, in the Pastor, represents the Church by many figures : it is especially a lofty tower composed of many and various stones. §

Were those documents which have been quoted the only ones assignable to the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles, it might be deemed well established that in the early part of the second century the Christian societies were governed each by its own presbyters or bishops, and served each by its own deacons, that they acknowledged no external authority or primacy, but were altogether independent of one another. In the Epistles attributed to Ignatius there are, however, symptoms of a remarkable change in process. Here, the will of the bishop is the people's rule. The presbytery is fitted to the bishop as strings to the harp. "We should look upon the bishop as we would upon the Lord Himself." The presbyters, submitting to him, submit "to the Father of Jesus Christ, the Bishop of us all." The three clerical orders are already developed :—"Your bishop presides in the place of God, and your presbyters in the place of the assembly of the Apostles, along with your deacons." "Your most admirable bishop, and the well-compacted spiritual crown of your presbytery, and your deacons who are according to God." "Ye are subject to the bishop as to Jesus Christ." "Fare ye well," is his greeting to the Trallians, "in Jesus Christ, while ye continue

* Ep. Barnab., cap. xvi.

† 2 Ep. Clem., cap. ii.

‡ 1 Ep. Clem., cap. xxxvii.

§ Herm. Simil., cix.

subject to the bishop as to the command [of God] and in like manner to the presbytery." The Philadelphians are told that "as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop." In the longer, and probably the more largely interpolated, version of these documents, the hierarchy appears thoroughly established. "Let governors be obedient to Cæsar; soldiers to those that command them; deacons to the presbyters as to high-priests; the presbyters and deacons and the rest of the clergy, together with all the people and the soldiers and the governors, and Cæsar [himself] to the bishop; the bishop to Christ, even as Christ to the Father." "Do nothing," says he, "without the bishop." The conditions of Divine favour are no longer, as in the New Testament, spiritual; they have become formal and external. "To all them that repent the Lord grants forgiveness, if they turn in penitence to the unity of God, and to communion with the bishop." The pseudo-Ignatius magnified his office. "It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast:" the longer recension adds, "or to present sacrifice." Says Bishop Ignatius to Bishop Polycarp:—"If any one reckon himself greater than the bishop, he is ruined." Marriage is only to be entered upon with "the approval of the bishop."*

From the Epistles which are acknowledged to be spurious it is unnecessary to quote. In these, the whole array of Church-officers is obviously paraded, as they existed at a later period. Here, the bishops have become priests; and we even meet with "the blessed Pope Linus!"† It is worthy of notice that whilst the longer Greek and Latin copies are more hierarchial than the shorter, the Syriac version, which is the shortest of all, is comparatively free from the sacerdotal taint. Perhaps

* Epp. Ignat. passim.

† Ignat. Ep. ad Mariam, cap. iv.

in considering the question of the genuineness of the Epistles attributed to Ignatius, it is scarcely possible to be uninfluenced by ecclesiastical prepossessions; but it is at least questionable whether there is satisfactory guarantee that, in reading even the shortest recension, the student has before him the genuine compositions of the bishop of Antioch.* Ignatius doubtless favoured the rising system of prelacy; and, in consequence of his well-known tendency, much was attributed to him, by way of interpolation or forgery, exceeding in ecclesiasticism anything he really wrote, in order that the sanction of antiquity might be claimed for dogmas and practices of subsequent growth.†

“Every town congregation of ancient Christianity,” says Bunsen, “was a Church. The constitution of that Church was a congregational constitution. In St. Paul’s Epistles, in the writings of Clemens Romanus, of Ignatius and of Polycarp, the congregation is the highest organ of the spirit as well as power of the Church. It is the body of Christ. . . . This congregation was governed and directed by a council of elders, which congregational council, at a later period, was presided over by a governing overseer, the bishop. But the ultimate decision, in important emergencies, rested with the whole congregation.”‡

In the second century, the episcopal system universally supplanted the Congregational or Presbyterian order of the primitive Churches. The prevalence of serious errors, particularly the different forms of Gnosticism, threatening to overthrow the doctrine and the discipline of Christendom, has been held to account for “an increase of official power, and the subjection of the Churches under episcopal authority.” § The persecu-

* *Vide* Mr. Basil Cooper’s *Free Church of Ancient Christendom*, Appendix K.

† “Le fait qu’on ait précisément choisi Ignace pour lui attribuer les théories épiscopales prouve suffisamment qu’il a travaillé d’une manière efficace à fortifier outre mesure l’autorité ecclésiastique au détriment de la liberté et de l’égalité des chrétiens.”—De Pressensé, *Histoire des trois premiers siècles de l’église chrétienne*, vol. ii., p. 464. *Vide* also a valuable note, K, at the end of the same volume.

‡ Hippolytus and his Age, vol. iii., p. 220.

§ Schenkel, in Herzog’s *Real. Encyc.*

tions that arose would naturally tend to concentration of administrative trust. At the same period, the anti-Christian doctrines of a priesthood and of sacrifice were largely adopted; and were no doubt favoured as tending to support the power and the pretensions of the clergy. An exaggerated importance was now attached to the merely outward connection with the visible ecclesiastical community.

Irenæus was the first great representative and exponent of this system. His was the famous dictum:—"Where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church." * The external society is emphatically the depository of the truth:—"The Apostles, like a rich man depositing his money in a bank, lodged in her hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth; so that every man whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life. For she is the entrance to life; all others are thieves and robbers." † The unity of the Church and her testimony is boldly proclaimed:—"She also believes these points just as if she had but one soul . . . and teaches them . . . as if she possessed only one mouth;" ‡ "undoubtedly the preaching of the Church is true and stedfast, in which one and the same way of salvation is shown throughout the whole world." § The same writer claims also for the Churches an Apostolical succession of chief pastors:—"We are in a position to reckon up those who were by the Apostles instituted bishops in the Churches, and the successions of these men to our own times;" || "all preserve the same form of ecclesiastical constitution." ¶

Quotations might easily be multiplied to show the growth of the ecclesiastical system. "The grades here in the Church," says Clement of Alexandria, "of bishops,

* Iren. *adv. Hær.*, L. III., cap. xxiv.

† *Ibid.*, L. III., cap. iv.

‡ *Ibid.*, L. I., cap. x.

§ *Ibid.*, L. V., cap. xx.

|| *Ibid.*, L. III., cap. iii.

¶ *Ibid.*, L. V., cap. xx.

presbyters, deacons, are imitations of the angelic glory.”*
 “The true Church, that which is really ancient, is one The pre-eminence of the Church is in its oneness.”† “The human assemblies which they (the heretics) hold were posterior to the Catholic Church.”‡
 “One is the only virgin mother. I love to call her the Church. . . . Calling her children to her, she nurses them with holy milk, namely, with the Word.”§

More spiritual representations are, however, not wanting. Tertullian, for example, teaches that the Church is dependent upon the Divine presence, and is manifested by the association of believers. “Wherever there are three (that is, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), there is the Church, which is a body of three.”||
 “In a company of two (or, where one or two are) is the Church; but the Church is Christ.”¶ The same writer also “opposes to the Church, as consisting of a number of bishops, the Church of the Spirit, which manifests itself through men enlightened by the Holy Spirit.”**

Thus the bishop, who had been *primus inter pares*, as the president of the council of elders, obtained a monarchical position. The legislative power resided in the presbytery; the judicial authority in the bishop. But even “in the time of Callistus (A.D. 220), the power of the Bishop of Rome was already more absolute than constitutional;” according to Hippolytus, Callistus asserted “that a bishop could never be deposed by the presbytery, or obliged to abdicate, even though he commit a sin unto death.”†† Of this doctrine, Hippolytus himself disapproved.

There is good reason for regarding the *schisms* of the

* Clem. Alex. Strom., L. VI., cap. 13.

† Ibid., L. VII., cap. 17.

‡ Ibid.

§ Clem. Alex. Pædag., L. I., cap. 6.

|| Tertul. de Bapt., cap. vi.

¶ Tertul. de Pœnit., cap. x.

** Neander's Church History, vol. i., p. 211.

†† Bunsen's Hippolytus and his Age, vol. i. 310.

early centuries as partaking in some degree of the character of protests against the ecclesiastical formalism and externalism of the times. The growing tendency in the Church was to attach the greatest importance to mere organization. The maxim of Irenæus, "*Ubi Ecclesia, ibi Spiritus*," was hardening into a definition. There was one Church, the marks of which were, not so much accordance with the Scriptures and vigour of spiritual life, as the existence of the recognized officers and government and an undoubted episcopal succession : to be in communion with this organized society, and to participate, in due form, in its prescribed ordinances ; this was to be in the way of eternal salvation. It is neither to be wondered at, nor regretted, that there were minds which revolted against this cruel exaggeration of the merit of mere system. "Schismatic" is a hard name, and those who have arrogated to themselves the appellation "Catholic" have usually deemed the flinging of this name an end of all controversy. But it is a remarkable fact that several important bodies of Christians, stigmatized as schismatics, have been admitted to have held fast the great cardinal doctrines of Christianity as faithfully as their adversaries. The points in dispute were points of order, discipline, and government, and in some instances were distinctly personal. And yet the great schismatical sects still held to the episcopal form of government. These facts indicate that different conceptions entertained of the nature of the Church were, more or less, at the root of these divisions. Without implying that the seceders were right, and the Catholics wrong, it may be affirmed that there was abroad a commendable spirit of rebellion against the stringency with which the ecclesiastical authorities applied their principles of priestly authority and external unity.

The earliest great division within the Church,—if this

expression may be used in distinction from the distortions of Christianity produced in the East by attempts to combine it with philosophical speculations, Jewish ideas or heathen mythologies, and in distinction also from the doctrinal heresies which existed from the very time of the Apostles,—was that known as Montanism, after the name of its fanatical Phrygian originator. The claim of supernatural gifts was doubtless enthusiasm; the assumption of an incarnate Paraclete was blasphemous; and the belief in the perpetuation of the prophetic order might tend to restlessness and might favour imposture. Still, Montanism, if it did not owe its rise, probably owed its progress, to a laudable spirit of reaction against the system then advancing to general acceptance, which limited Church teaching and Church authority by lines of human officialism, and was disposed to overlook the Scriptural conditions of communion and the spiritual constitution of the Church.*

The most reasonable explanation of the' adhesion to the Montanists of their greatest name is to be found, not in the mere natural temperament of Tertullian,† but in the repugnance he felt to the habits of thought and action which he perceived in the hierarchical party. The Montanists were earnest supporters of Trinitarianism; the Sabellian party, represented by Praxeas, found in these sectaries their bitterest opponents. An alliance appears to have been formed at Rome, between the hierarchical party and the heretics, against the Montanism which opposed the sacerdotalism of the one and the Sabellianism of the other. Tertullian was disgusted with this coalition, and threw the vast energies of his nature into the support of what he deemed the truth. "*Il se fit*

* "Les Montanistes . . . par leur sévérité ascétique et leur énergie revendication de la sacrificature universelle, qui allait jusqu' à abolir la prêtrise spéciale, étaient les ennemis jurés de la tendance hiérarchique."—De Pressensé, vol. iii. p 448.

† The view of many historians,—as of Milman, *vide History of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 212-4; *Latin Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 37-9.

*Montaniste tout d'abord par sa vive répulsion pour ceux qui repoussaient le Montanisme.”**

Montanism was a healthy power, in so far as it opposed a Church of the Spirit to one of mere order and form, so far as it recognized (and that practically) the universal priesthood of Christians, and so far as it gave importance to the prophetic function in the Church of the New Dispensation. In these respects it offered some compensation to Christendom for the evils wrought by the encouragement it undoubtedly gave to asceticism and to spiritual pride. And it should be borne in mind that, lofty as were the pretensions of the Montanists, yet (to quote the words of Neander) “it does not exactly appear that they were inclined to separate from the rest of the Church and to renounce its communion.”†

The violations of the so-called “Catholic unity,” for which Novatus and Novatian were respectively responsible, were more properly schisms than was the Phrygian sect. They are chiefly interesting because of the importance of the sees they threatened and the bishops whose opposition they aroused. Men who ventured on an encounter with Cyprian of Carthage and Cornelius of Rome,—when these two metropolitans were severally and jointly bent upon the establishment of the episcopal unity as one great purpose of official life,—could not but immortalize themselves and their defeat. A most curious example of the way in which circumstances furnish battleground for principles, is the history of the discussions raised about the *sacrificati*, *thurifici*, and *libellatici*, who applied for re-admission to the fellowship of the Church. The eagerness with which they sought this privilege proves to how enormous an extent belief in the importance of communion with the visible Church had grown by the middle

* This view is that of De Pressensé, who argues forcibly and eloquently in its support. *Deuxième Série*, tome I, livre ii.

† *Vide* Neander’s *General Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 196-223.

of the third century. The value popularly attached to the recommendations or certificates of "confessors" is an illustration of the growth of superstition; but it is more than this, it is an evidence that Church-fellowship was ceasing to be the privilege of individual character, and was becoming a formal and technical *status*. The prudent determination of the great bishops neither, on the one hand, to submit to the indiscriminate prerogative claimed by the confessors, nor, on the other hand, to be guided by the severe and inflexible principles of the ultra-puritan factions, was undoubtedly the means of consolidating their official authority, and at the same time of enlarging the scope of its exercise. The Novatians denied the power of the Church to receive again into communion such as had sinned against God—especially referring to the lapsed; and the popular idea of their exclusiveness was typified in the jocular remark of Constantine to the Novatian bishop: "Acesius, take a ladder, and get up to heaven by yourself."* It is a remarkable fact that Novatus, who at Carthage had been the zealous upholder of the privilege of the confessors, and had opposed the just and moderate caution of Cyprian, became at Rome the advocate of the severer schism. Surely this is an indication, not merely that the man was fickle or personally ambitious, or both, but that there was abroad at the time a temper disposed to resist—although as time proved in vain—the exercise of resolute episcopal authority, and to favour a more free and popular conduct of Church affairs.†

The writings of Cyprian abound with assertions and

* Socrates, L. I., cap. 10. Sozomen, L. I., cap. 22

† "Novatian maintained that purity and holiness, being one of the essential marks of a true Church, every Church which, neglecting the right use of discipline, tolerates in its bosom or re-admits to its communion, such persons as, by gross sins, have broken their baptismal vows, ceases by that very act to be a true Christian Church, and forfeits all the rights and privileges of a true Church."—Neander, vol. i. p. 343.

"Novatian and his opponents were involved in the same fundamental error, and differed only in their application of it; and this fundamental error was that of confounding the notions of the visible and of the invisible Church. Hence it was that Novatian, transferring the pre-

claims based on what we should call the High Church system. In writing to the "lapsed," he rebukes them for claiming peace of "the Church" in the name of a confessor, instead of submissively seeking this restoration to fellowship from the ecclesiastical authorities. Quoting Christ's words to Peter, he argues:—"Thence, through the changes of times and successions, the ordering of bishops and the plan of the Church flows onwards; so that the Church is founded upon the bishops, and every act of the Church is controlled by these same rulers. Since this, then, is founded on the Divine law, I marvel that some, with daring temerity, have chosen to write to me as if they wrote in the name of the Church; when the Church is established in the bishop and clergy, and all who stand."*

In his treatise on the "Unity of the Church," written "on the occasion of the schism of Novatian, to keep back from him the Carthaginians, who already were not averse to him, on account of Novatus and some other presbyters of his Church, who had originated the whole disturbance," Cyprian uses some very strong language concerning the duty of conformity and the evil of schism. Thus he writes:—"Hanc Ecclesiæ unitatem qui non tenet, tenere se fidem credit? qui Ecclesiæ renititur et resistit, in Ecclesia se esse confidit? . . . Quam unitatem firmiter tenere et vindicare debemus, maxime episcopi, qui in Ecclesia praesidemus, ut episcopatum quoque ipsum unum atque indivisum probemus." "Does he who does not hold this unity of the Church think that he holds the faith? Does he who strives against and resists the

dicare of purity and unspotted holiness which belongs to the invisible Church, the community of the saints as such (Eph. v. 27), to the visible form in which it manifests itself, concluded that every Church which suffered unclean members to remain in it ceased to be a true branch of the one Church. . . . His opponents differed from him only in laying at the basis of their speculations the notion of the Church as carried on and sustained by the succession of bishops, and then deriving the predicates of purity and holiness from that notion."—*Ibid.*, p. 344.

* *Cypr. Ep.*, xxvi. (Oxford Ed., xxxiii.)

Church trust that he is in the Church? . . . And this unity we ought firmly to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops, who preside in the Church, that we may also prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided." And again:—"Quisquis ab Ecclesia segregatus adulteræ jungitur, a promissis Ecclesiæ separatur. Nec pervenit ad Christi præmia qui relinquit ecclesiam Christi. Alienus est, profanus est, hostis est. Habere jam non potest Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam non habet matrem." "Whoever is separated from the Church, and is joined to an adulteress, is separated from the promises of the Church, nor can he who forsakes the Church of Christ attain to the rewards of Christ. He is a stranger, he is profane, he is an enemy. He can no longer have God for his father, who has not the Church for his mother."*

Even martyrdom was pronounced by Cyprian to be of no avail (if indeed any one could have fortitude to endure it without the encouragement of the Eucharist) without reconciliation to the Church.†

The claims thus put forward by the bishops were but too readily conceded. We find that the Roman confessors who had countenanced the schism of Novatian and Novatus, acknowledged, upon their repentance and return to the Catholic unity:—"We are not ignorant that there is one God; that there is one Christ, the Lord whom we have confessed, and one Holy Ghost; and that there ought to be one bishop in the Catholic Church."‡

It was part of the episcopal policy to keep the inferior clergy in a position of subjection. Cyprian, in one of his letters written to a brother bishop who had been troubled by the opposition and insolence of one of his deacons, observes that "deacons ought to remember that the Lord

* Cypr. de unit Eccl., cc. 4, 5, 6. The English from Clark's translation, pp. 381-2.

† Cypr. Ep. liii. (Oxford Ed., lvii.)

‡ Ibid., xlv. (Oxford Ed., xlix.)

chose Apostles, that is, bishops and overseers; while Apostles appointed for themselves deacons after the ascent of the Lord into heaven, as ministers of their episcopacy and of the Church. But if we may dare anything against God who makes bishops, deacons may also dare against us by whom they are made.”*

In this connection it may be well to remark that even Cyprian was accustomed to take counsel both of his clergy and laity in the appointment of Church officers, as appears from a passage in one of his letters to the clergy and people about the ordination of Aurelius—a brave confessor of the faith—as reader in the Church; the bishop deigns to explain his reasons for deviating in this instance from his ordinary method.†

Cyprian, though a very bold and and a very able man, and a memorable martyr for Christ’s cause, must be regarded as one of the most successful agents in bringing about the practical ascendancy of sacerdotal and prelatic doctrines. He did much to repress Christian freedom, and to substitute the symmetry of organization for that life which is spiritual and varied and full. His dictum, “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*,” in the sense in which it was uttered and received, was pernicious and misleading; and he is accountable to some extent for the rapid development of a system which has made Christianity a name of reproach where it should have been a name of honour and an earnest of spiritual help.

The most important and famous of the early schisms—that named after Donatus—was one that turned mainly upon the idea of the Church, as viewed by two orders of mind of opposing tendencies. The causes of the schism were latent before the occasion of its manifestation occurred. It is incredible that a mere personal rivalry, an inconsiderable incident, should be “productive of a me-

* Cyp. Ep., lxiv. (Oxford Ed., iii.)

† Ibid., xxxii. (Oxford Ed., xxxviii.)

morale schism, which afflicted the provinces of Africa above three hundred years, and was extinguished only with Christianity itself,"* and the extent of which appears from the fact that 400 bishops acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Donatist primate. Whether or not Caecilianus was ordained to the bishopric of Carthage by a *traditor*, is, to our apprehension, a matter of infinitesimally small importance: to understand in how different a light this question was regarded by his opponents, respect must be had to their peculiar views. The Donatists considered that the outward Church should consist of renewed and holy persons; that a nominally Christian society which admitted or retained unworthy members was by such sinful laxity unchurched, and that ministerial or sacramental acts were vitiated if they were performed by unholy men.

Now, Caecilianus had been consecrated to the bishopric of Carthage by Felix of Aptungis, in the absence of the Numidian bishops, who held the Puritan opinions alluded to. The ecclesiastics accused Felix of having been a *traditor*, that is, of having, in the time of persecution, delivered up sacred books to the heathen authorities. As this was in their view a heinous if not unpardonable offence, certainly disqualifying for episcopal duties, if the charge were well founded, Felix was in their esteem incapable of conveying grace of ordination, and the orders of the newly-elected successor to Mensurius were invalid. The Numidians, accordingly, appointed Majorinus to the see, and a religious sentiment was by this event crystallized into a schism.

After the death of the first anti-bishop, Donatus, a man of zeal and ability, was elected as his successor, and from him the *Donatistae*, *Donatiani*, or (as they called themselves) the *pars Donati* took their appellation. As

* Gibbon, vol. iii. p. 44.

a sect, their leading principle was purity of communion ; their endeavour was to make the Church visible an exact counterpart of the elect society, as it is in the mind of the All-knowing. They admitted that hypocrites would succeed, to some extent, in baffling this attempt. The Donatists unchurched for laxity of discipline the greater part of Christendom ; according to the representation of Augustine, they affirmed that the Christian religion had disappeared from the whole earth, except from certain parts of Africa in which their own communities were settled.* Incredible as it may seem to the modern reader, they applied to themselves, as resident in Africa, this passage from the Canticles: "Tell me, thou whom my soul loveth, where thou liest in the South." †

The great champion of the "Catholic" party in the Donatist controversy was the famous Augustine, to whose writings we are indeed indebted for most of our knowledge of the doctrines of his opponents. The voice and pen of the Bishop of Hippo did strenuous service in this, as in other famous conflicts. The doctrines of grace which he so ably and successfully systematized seem to be inconsistent with the principles of sacerdotalism, which had become distinctive of Western Christianity ; but there was a way of reconciling even these opposing forces.‡ Without the personal arrogance, Augustine had a fair measure of the rigid ecclesiastical dogmatism of Cyprian, his great African predecessor. Augustine was naturally indignant with the Donatists for claiming Cyprian as of their way of thinking. It was indeed the case that Cyprian had set the example of re-baptizing those who had professedly been received into Church-fellowship by the men who were deemed heretics ; but the

* "Vos enim eis dicitis, propter traditores quos non ostenditis, remansisse ecclesiam Christi in sola Africa partis Donati."—Aug. Ep., clxvi.

† Ca. i. 7, "Indica mihi, quem diligit anima mea, ubi cubes in meridie."—Aug. contr. Petil.

‡ For some profound remarks on this, *vide* Milman's Latin Christianity, book II., chap. ii.

Catholic champion urges that the Carthaginian had always insisted upon the duty of maintaining inviolate the unity of the Church, and that only by putting themselves in this matter upon Cyprian's platform could they justly quote Cyprian's authority.*

In his epistle in reply to that of Petilianus, Augustine admits that the question between the two parties is this : "*Ubi sit Ecclesia ?*" "Where is the Church?" If it be here or there, in this place, but not in that, then the Donatists are right. But when they say, "Lo! *here* is Christ!" the sheep do not hear them, but listen to the Shepherd's voice. The controversy is not concerning the Head; Him they jointly confess; it is concerning the body. In contending for the Catholicity of this body, Augustine quotes the promise given by God to Abraham, that all nations should be blessed in his seed, and the predictions of Isaiah referring to the extent of the Messiah's kingdom. He also brings forward as a convincing argument the universal commission given by Christ to His apostles : "Go ye and make disciples of all nations." †

So great was the importance attached by the Bishop of Hippo to the Catholic unity, that he would not admit the lawfulness of the Donatist secession, even if the charge made against Felix and others were substantiated.‡

With regard to the purity of the actual and militant Church, Augustine proclaims himself at variance with the Donatists who were Puritans of the strictest order. Wherever in his works he had celebrated the Church as

* "Quidque etiam beati Cypriani mentionem facere audetis, velut ille author sit vestrae divisionis, tantus defensor Catholicæ unitatis et pacis? *Primo esto in Ecclesia*, quam constat tenuisse ac prædicasse Cyprianum, et tunc aude velut authorem sententiæ tuæ nominare Cyprianum."—Aug. contr. Cresc., L. II., cap. xxxi.

† "Venite ad Catholicam concordantem quam Cyprianus non deseruit fluctuantem."—Aug. de bapt. contr. Don., L. II.

‡ Aug. Ep. contra. Petil. passim.

§ "Testimoniis enim divinis, lites suas præferunt, quia in causa Cæciliani quondam Ecclesiæ Carthaginensis episcopi, cui crimina objecerunt quæ nec potuerunt probare nec possunt, si ab Ecclesia Catholica, hoc est ab unitate omnium gentium dividerent. . . Tamen Ecclesiam Christi, quæ non litigiosis opinionibus fingitur, sed divinis attestationibus comprobatur, propter quemlibet hominem relinquere non debemus."—Aug. Ep., L.

without spot or wrinkle, such representations, he says, are not to be regarded as applying to the Church as it now is, but to that which is in course of preparation, which, when revealed, shall be full of glory;* and, arguing in favour of the validity of the sacraments, even of the imperfect Church, he affirms that great as was the difference between Peter and Judas, there was no difference in the worth of the baptism they administered.

Augustine did not hesitate to declare the communion with the visible Church to be a condition of salvation. Confusing the spiritual society, which is defined by spiritual notes, with the organization, which is admitted not to be coincident in its boundaries with that other, he was misled by the very teaching of the Apostle regarding the body of Christ. "He who is not numbered amongst the members of Christ cannot enjoy Christian salvation."† At the same time he was ready to acknowledge that persons may enjoy the outward privileges of the Church without being truly of the Church.‡

Donatists and Catholics alike deemed it essential to salvation that a man should be in outward communion with an ecclesiastical organization. But the former, whilst they were right in protesting against the confusion between the Church and the world, to which the times were rapidly drifting, and right in taking all reasonable precaution against impurity of communion, were certainly narrow and uncharitable in so conceiving of the Church and of the ministry, as to limit the Divine grace to their own restricted borders.

In natural relation to their opinions concerning the

* ". . non sic accipiendum est, quasi jam sit, sed quæ præparatur, ut sit quando apparebit etiam gloriosa."—Aug. *Retract.*, L. II., cap. xviii.

† "Hæc autem Ecclesia corpus Christi est, sicut Apostolus dicit, 'pro corpore ejus, quæ est Ecclesia.' Unde utique manifestum est, eum qui non est in membris Christi, Christianam salutem habere non posse."—Aug. *Ep. contr. Petil.* For proof that this was the doctrine of "the Fathers" generally, *vide* Palmer's *Lectures on the Church of Christ*, lecture iii.

‡ "Et multi tales sunt in sacramentorum communione cum Ecclesia, et tamen jam non sunt in Ecclesia."

purity of the Church were their beliefs regarding the union between Church and State. At first the Donatists had courted the imperial jurisdiction, at the time when toleration was proclaimed, and the empire was becoming professedly Christian; but having failed to satisfy the arbitrators appointed by the Emperor, of the justice of their positions (and with regard to the charge against Felix there can be little doubt that they were in the wrong), and being unwilling to submit to comprehension within the Catholic unity, even on the most favourable terms, they came under the displeasure of the State. They were the more obnoxious on account of the violent and criminal excesses of what might be called in modern political language their extreme "Left"—the Circumcellion party. The methods of toleration and of persecution were employed in vain to reduce these African Churches to uniformity. The endurance of persecution probably opened the eyes of the Donatists to discover the proper limitations of the civil power, which is bound to take cognizance, not of sins, but of crimes, and to repress, not heresies and schisms, which may be only the signs of intellectual and even spiritual life, but conspiracies and insurrections, which endanger the public peace. The Donatists were anti-State Churchmen; Augustine and his party became the advocates of intolerance and persecution. Had the former sect, however, been in imperial favour, it is not unlikely that their position might have modified their principles. In one respect they followed their usual bent towards extremes; they looked upon the State as a power not independent of, but hostile to, the Church of Christ, identifying the political authorities with what in New Testament language is called "the world."*

The Donatists arose just at the time when a momentous change took place in the outward relations of Christ-

* *Vide* Neander's General Church History, vol. iii. p. 301.

ianity. Hitherto the followers of Christ had been by turns tolerated and persecuted by the Roman Emperors, and by their representatives in the provinces. Early in the fourth century, Constantine became first a professor and then the patron of the Christian faith. Henceforth, the danger to which the Church was exposed was, not the frown, but the smile of the Sovereign and the State. A bishopric was, in some instances, no longer a post of honourable danger, but one of consideration and repute, or even of emolument and political power. The clerical profession came to be looked upon as a path to worldly distinction, and had consequently attractions for unspiritual men. The alliance between the Church and the State was so close that the civil power made use of the ecclesiastical, for its own ends, and conferred in return advantages which were too keenly appreciated, and too eagerly accepted. Thus an opportunity was given to the Emperor to assume a sort of lay-sovereignty in the summoning of councils, and the issuing of commissions for the settlement of doctrinal and ecclesiastical disputes; and it most naturally followed that the same sanctions and penalties were employed to enforce divisions arrived at by imperial authority in matters spiritual, as in matters strictly political. •

A religion whose Founder had been unjustly put to death by the authority of a Roman procurator was not likely to look for much favour from the powers of this world; and indeed its first adherents possessed both the injunction and the disposition to think lightly of the treatment they might receive from those powers. Still, as the example of St. Paul clearly proves, the promulgators of Christianity were ready to accept such protection or justice as the civil power would accord to them in the pursuit of their labour of evangelization. Both with the Jews and with the Romans, and probably with many

of the nations under imperial rule, religion was a department of State ; and as it consisted to a large extent in outward ceremonies, there was obvious convenience in such an arrangement. But the new faith, or "superstition," as it was called by its foes, introduced among mankind nothing less than a new life. Spiritual in its principles, aggressive in its action, it could not make itself understood by "the lords of humankind." Hence arose its exemption from the general tolerance, accorded under the empire to the faiths of subject peoples, and hence, in accordance with the wisdom of Providence, the ordeal of affliction, of scorn, of persecution, in which Christianity proved its Divine origin, and asserted its claim to universal sway. During the age of the ten persecutions, outward force in the lordliest and haughtiest of hands confronted spiritual power impersonated oftentimes in the lowly and despised ; and the result was that "the weak things of the world confounded the mighty." Early in the fourth century the Emperor Constantine entered into an alliance with the Church of Christ.

By this singular change in the position of the recent but progressive religion, it could not but happen that the idea of the Christian Church should be affected. It was not simply that the Emperor as an individual embraced the faith ; amidst all her difficulties, the Church, as we have seen, had thoroughly organized herself, and was already possessed of vast power, though wielding no earthly sword ; and into some kind of relation with this organized body the Emperors must come. It was not unnatural that the chief of the State should in some sense become the governor of the Church ; had it been otherwise it might have been feared that an *imperium in imperio* would have been established. To us, indeed, it appears that it would have been well for the Church to have tolerated no interference, and accepted no favours of a

special kind from an unbaptized layman. Notwithstanding all that has been said in praise of the impartiality of statesmen, as compared with ecclesiastics, and the temporary advantages secured by the presidency of a Cæsar over such a council as that of Nicæa, vastly more was lost than was gained by the accordance to worldly power of spiritual authority. One thing is certain: had not "the princes of this world," by patronizing Christianity, and giving civil immunities to its ministers, and civil sanctions to its censures, entangled themselves with the spiritual rulers of Christendom, they would never in after ages have come to endure the interference and the indignities at the hands of Rome, which are the lasting shame of the Mediæval Church. The proper part of Christianity was to infuse new life, new principles, new hopes into mankind; and these were sufficient, gradually and insensibly, by the process of conviction, to remodel and to regulate all human affairs. Organization was necessary and beneficial; episcopacy, that is diocesan episcopacy, may have had the recommendation of expediency, for the protection of the weak in ages when the spiritual power was the only sufficient check upon the lawless violence of the feudal chiefs. Patriarchates may have been the necessary complement of episcopacy. Nay, whilst unity of faith and practice obtained, the Church might conceivably become, without injury, in the loosest sense of the word, a corporation; though our estimate of human nature leads us to deem this extremely improbable. But to accept from the State, immunities, emoluments, and honours, to use the secular arm in the suppression or punishment of heresy and schism—this was to throw open the door to a thousand corruptions. A price must be paid for such seeming advantages, and whilst the advantages were fictitious, the price was all but ruinous; for the Church paid for them by selling

both her purity and her freedom. Nor has she yet for the most part recognized the method by which alone these Divine blessings can be recovered. In the crisis of her fate there was no friendly voice raised in far-sighted, wholesome, if unwelcome, wisdom to exclaim :—

“Timeo Danaos, et dona ferentes!”

We have seen the congregational system merged into the episcopal. Christendom was a scattered galaxy of bishoprics, and communion with a Catholic bishop was the test of Christianity. But as human nature tends to society, so does society tend to centralization. The clergyman, still more emphatically the bishop, was the “persona” of the Church. But a still higher unity was desired ; a more palpable presentation or summing-up of the Divine community. During the age of persecution this could hardly be realized ; but now that Christianity was the religion of the Court, the obstacles to publicity and to manifested power ceased to exist. Provincial synods had indeed been held in the various parts of the empire, and under the presidency of the bishop of chief influence, had decided such questions as had been referred to their wisdom. But the age of Œcumenical Councils had now come.

The idea of a general Church assembly, which should reduce to something like uniformity the beliefs and practices of Christendom, originated in the mind of Constantine, by whose authority it could alone be made a reality. The Council of Nicæa became, in many respects, the precedent of those which followed. Summoned and presided over by the first Christian Emperor, there gathered around this assembly much of worldly dignity and glory. As the Nicæan “Fathers” deliberated upon the Arian controversy, determined the creed of orthodox Christendom, settled the time for observing Easter, agreed upon

canons of ecclesiastical discipline, they were the conscious representatives of the whole Christian world. Amongst them there might be selfishness, jealousy, hatred, and hostility, but they were the parliament, the microcosm of the visible Church on earth; they were the Church.*

That this was the light in which General Councils were regarded for ages, appears from the reverence with which their decrees were received and honoured. Although the authority of the first six of these assemblies has always been acknowledged both in East and West, a special respect has been paid to the Council of Nicæa. Since the great division of the Christian world, a truly Œcumenical synod has become impossible, and this fact perhaps accounts, to some extent, for the high estimation in which the early representative assemblies have been so generally held. Their decisions have been considered to express, more fully than was otherwise possible, the true mind of the Church. Even under the Papacy there have not been wanting those who have set a General Council above the Pope in authority; and many of those who have no sympathy with Gallican liberality, are yet ready to concede that a Council stands upon a level with the Pope as interpreting the mind of the Church.

In the compendiums of belief used in the early ages for imparting to catechumens a knowledge of the first principles of Christianity, there was no clause relating to the Church. What these creeds substantially were, may be learnt from the specimens preserved to us in the works of Irenæus† and Tertullian.‡ They concerned the Deity and the provision for human salvation made by Divine mercy. From these took its rise, as it were by

* *Vide* Stanley's *Eastern Church*, lect. ii. Neander's *Church History*, vol. iii. p. 248. Milman's *Latin Christianity*, book II., chap. iii. *History of Christianity*, book IV., chap. i.

† *Iren. Contr. Hær.*, L. I., cap. x.; L. III., cap. iv.

‡ *Tert. de Virgin. Veland.*, cap. i.; *Contra Præxam*, cap. ii.; *Præscript. adv. Hæret.*, cap. xiii.

growth, the ancient Creed commonly called the Apostles', which has been used, though in the West only, from early times. In this well-known "symbol," the clause relating to the Church has been amplified by an important addition. It runs thus :—"The holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints." There is reason to believe that these clauses are but one article of belief, the second clause being explanatory of the first.

The Nicene Creed, as at first adopted, was confined to an exposition of the doctrine concerning the persons of the Godhead. In its later (Constantinopolitan, or Chalcedonian) form, in which it has been in use, in both East and West, for fourteen hundred years, it has the words, "and I believe one, holy,* Catholic and Apostolic Church." Two things are noteworthy in this connection. The doctrine of the Church must have held a high place in the esteem of Christians to have been put so prominently and honourably in the Creed. There is also an implication that by the Church something more than a mere earthly society, however dignified, is intended : otherwise it would not be an object of faith ; as the rest of the creed refers to unseen and insensible realities, a fair presumption is, that the same is the case with this.

But the idea of the Church was to undergo a yet further change. The process of centralization was carried another step. The Church, which had been personified in the Catholic bishops, and on a grander scale had been represented by the Councils, came to be incarnated (so to speak) in a single man. That the unity of the Church might be exhibited, its discipline preserved, its independence and power sustained, the more effectively, Christendom acquiesced in the assumption of the Bishops of Rome, that communion with them was the true test of the Church of Christ. And in conjunction

* The epithet "holy" has been omitted from the English version.

with the domination of the Papal system, there prevailed a new relation between the Church and the political powers of Europe. As if still further to externalize religion, the earthly head of the Church became a secular potentate, and was mixed up in the alliances, the intrigues and the wars of the Western nations. It has been said, without exaggeration, that, as the soul rules the body, so it was the aim of the Papacy, through the Emperor, to rule the world.

The mediæval idea of the Church may be summed up in one word,—the Papacy. For the concentration of the ecclesiastical empire in Rome there were two grounds; one of the nature of religious sentiment, the other of political association. It was believed that the Church at Rome was founded by the Apostle Peter; it was known that Rome had been the mistress of the world. The steps by which the Bishops of Rome advanced, from the exercise of metropolitan and patriarchal authority over Southern Italy, to the assumption of primacy, and indeed universal episcopacy, over the whole Church, are related by the ecclesiastical historians.

Irenæus, in refuting the heretics by the argument that the orthodox doctrines were held by the Churches which had enjoyed a regular succession of bishops from the time of the Apostles, quotes the Church of Rome as the most important and conclusive in its testimony to the truth. He speaks of “the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul,” and affirms that “it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre-eminent authority” * (*potiorem principalitatem.*) But, as Mr. Hallam has observed, the authority “is plainly not limited to the bishop of that city, nor is he

* Iren. adv. Hær., L. III., cap. iii.

personally mentioned.* Cyprian, the most sacerdotally inclined of the earlier fathers, does indeed, in a friendly letter to Cornelius, Bishop of Rome, speak of "the throne of Peter," "the chief Church whence priestly unity takes its source."† But we may well infer from the tone adopted by the Carthaginian in his subsequent controversy with Stephen, that these high-sounding phrases were complimentary rhetoric; for Rome has seldom heard language of more defiant independence than she had to endure from the resolute and haughty Cyprian.

But though eminent and distant bishops might for a season preserve their independence, and scorn the pretensions of him they deemed their Roman colleague, there were causes in operation which rendered certain the supremacy of this great see. There was among the patriarchates no one fitted to enter the lists with Rome as competitor for spiritual empire. Jerusalem was but a memory; and the Jewish converts were now only a small fragment of the Christian community. Antioch and Alexandria were torn and harassed by doctrinal and personal disputes; Constantinople had not the prestige of antiquity. But Rome had maintained a regular succession of orthodox bishops, and the weakness of her sisters had been her strength. It was, however, the fall of the Western Empire which was the chief occasion of the elevation of the Roman see to power and primacy. The removal of the seat of empire by Constantinople to the shores of the Bosphorus, the transference to Ravenna of the Western division of imperial rule, the capture of Rome by the Goths; these were the steps by which pagan Rome was humiliated, by which Christian Rome was exalted to the throne of power.‡

The capture of the seven-hilled city, in A.D. 410, was the occasion of the composition by Augustine of his

* Hallam's *Middle Ages*, chap. vii., note 3.

† *Cypr. Ep.*, liv.

‡ *Vide Milman's Latin Christianity*, book II., chap. i.

greatest work, and indeed the greatest work of Christian antiquity,—the “City of God.” Although the main purpose of this treatise is to contrast the pagan society and government of ancient Rome with the glorious polity which is destined to be universal in extent and sway, yet there is in it no indication of a belief in a Romano-Christian Empire, no anticipation of the Papal system as perfected in after centuries ; but, on the contrary, a confident prediction of a Messianic kingdom consequent upon the change from the old earth to the new.

Innocent I. was a man able and ready to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the downfall of the pagan city to advance the dignity and the authority of his see. The Council of Sardica had already accorded to the Roman Bishop the right of hearing appeals,—a right which had been confirmed by imperial authority. It was the policy of Innocent to claim supremacy over the West, although it depended upon circumstances, to what extent his claims might be conceded. The idea of Papal dominion was in his mind ; and with the process of centuries, repeated assertions would plant that idea in the mind of Western Christendom.

The work which Innocent had so boldly commenced at the beginning of the fifth century, Leo the Great, in the middle of that century, pushed forward with equal ambition and vigour. The political situation was still favourable to the growth of the Papal power ; and the religious condition of the East, of which the proceedings of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon were symptoms, enabled the occupant of the Roman see to further his designs of supremacy.

The Africans might resist the Roman claim even to the last, and in some respects successfully ; Hilary might deny to his face the pretensions of the great Leo ; the fathers of Chalcedon might raise the prelate of Con-

stantinople to an equal dignity with the Roman Bishop : but from the seed long ago planted had grown a sapling, green and vigorous, which was destined to become a stalwart and stately tree.

The constitution of the empire naturally suggested what should be the constitution of the Church.* With the decay of freedom and the growth of dominion, the republic had merged into the empire ; and a similar transition was now taking place in the ecclesiastical realm. The Council of Sardica had already accorded to the Roman Bishop the right of hearing appeals, a right which had been confirmed by imperial authority. Reasons have been given why in the West such appeals should be only too readily addressed to the metropolitan see : and the long-continued disputes in the East rendered the favour of Rome valuable to either party, and inclined them in turn to concede her claims.

The personal ability and ambition of some of the more distinguished Popes were directed towards absorbing the idea of the Church into that of the Roman obedience. Gregory the Great (590-604), by his inflexible will and untiring energy, as well as by his dexterous employment of human weaknesses, advanced the empire, not of Christianity alone, but of the Roman see. His authoritative voice was heard throughout the Churches of the West ; and, at the same time, he fiercely resented the assumption by the Constantinopolitan Patriarch of the proud title of " Universal Bishop." † Although Gregory affirmed the assumption of such a title to be nothing short of blasphemy, his successors have not scrupled to accept the designation, "*Universalis Ecclesiæ Episcopus*," or " Bishop of the Universal Church."

* "The community of the Roman Empire and the right of citizenship, even before the time of Hippolytus, wonderfully favoured the idea of the Catholic (universal) Church."—Bunsen's *Hippolytus*, vol. iii. p. 227.

† Milman's *Latin Christianity*, book III., chap. vii. Hallam's *Middle Ages*, chap. vii. "Gregory seems to have established the appellative jurisdiction of the See of Rome."

The Papal system was, however, consolidated in the Pontificate of Nicolas I. (858–867),* “one of the proudest and most aspiring of the Roman Pontiffs,”† “who, if he advanced no absolutely unexampled pretensions to supremacy in behalf of the Roman see, yet by the favourable juncture and auspicious circumstances which he seized to assert and maintain that authority, did more than all his predecessors to strengthen and confirm it.”‡ The most remarkable of the events in the life of Nicolas, for the purpose now under consideration, were his disputes with the great Archbishops of Trèves, Cologne, and Rheims, in which he humbled the pride and forced the submission of those powerful princes of the Church. This was a severe blow to the aristocratical sentiment which had exerted for centuries a mighty influence throughout Christendom, and favoured the monarchical principle which was now on the high-road to ascendancy.

It was not merely in becoming a vast and highly-organized corporation under an almost despotic government, that the Church departed from its original idea; it became a secular power, ranking with the great States of Europe, and even assuming to dictate to kings and emperors. Legates or Papal ambassadors were commissioned to the several courts. A jurisdiction was asserted over all causes into which morals entered as a predominating element, especially in cases of marriage, divorce, and adultery. Attempts were made to bring the powers of this world under the control of the successor of St. Peter; and means, deemed in that state of society of most formidable character, were used to effect this end. Excommunication,—a weapon which even the proudest of potentates could not despise,—was directed against the rebellious and refractory. Communities were laid under interdict, and thus deprived of the sacred and precious

* Guizot.

† Gibbon.

‡ Milman.

ministrations of religion,—and more carnal weapons were often wielded by the arch-prelate. Intrigue was employed to use one monarch, or one nation, as the chastiser of another. The sword itself was drawn, and the spiritual head of Christendom marched his own soldiers to the field.

In the eighth century were published documents, which, being in themselves unquestionable forgeries, were intended to serve the ambitious ends of Rome, and which because of the uncritical and superstitious habits of the times did actually, to a large extent, serve those ends. The “false decretals,” known as of Isidore, professed to be the decrees of popes and the canons of councils, from the earliest times. Their manifest design was “the aggrandisement of the see of Rome, and the aggrandisement of the whole clergy in subordination to the see of Rome.”* About the same time appeared the “Donation of Constantine,” an admitted forgery, conferring temporal sovereignty in Italy upon the Pope. If the former documents were convenient weapons in Papal hands for reducing bishops and archbishops to due obedience, the latter document may have added a sanctity to the real donation of Charlemagne, and a prestige to the more than royal pretensions of the occupants of the fisherman’s chair.

Nicolas “tamed kings and tyrants, and ruled the world like a sovereign,”† but there were those who came after him who out-Heroded Herod. In his treatment of Lothaire, Nicolas had shown himself a bold man, and (in the main question) a righteous bishop. But priestly pride has never furnished a more striking contrast to the demeanour of Him who was “meek and lowly in heart” than was offered by Hildebrand when the emperor grovelled at his feet. Compare Ambrose, at the door of the cathedral of Milan, refusing to admit the Emperor Theodosius to the communion of the Church, with Gregory

* Milman’s *Latin Christianity*, book V., chap. iv. † A chronicler quoted by Milman.

the Seventh, shut up in the fortress of Canossa, while Henry shivered barefooted in his woollen shirt three days successively in the castle court, waiting for absolution, and there is a fine contrast between the spiritual dignity and independence which were the claim to honour and the secret of power in the persons of the earlier prelates, and that carnal arrogance and worldly ambition which in the mediæval Pontiffs did indeed astonish and overawe the world for a season, but which also prepared the way for a certain and irrecoverable fall!

The thirteenth century witnessed the culmination of the Papal ascendancy.* From the accession of Innocent III. to the death of Boniface VIII., "Rome inspired all the terror of her ancient name. She was once more the mistress of the world, and kings were her vassals." During this age, the evident purpose and end of the action of the Roman Court was the personal and official glory and even the selfish enrichment of the Pope and his dependents; the means employed to this end were often monstrous and arbitrary assumptions. Spiritual terrors were made subservient to Papal aggrandisement. "It is," said Boniface VIII., "necessary to everlasting salvation that every human creature be subject to the Pope of Rome." The Church had indeed undergone a degrading change, when the spiritual society became the means, and the ministry and the organization became the end, of its existence. Of Boniface it is said, that "he appeared at the jubilee in 1300 . . . dressed in imperial habits, with the two swords borne before him, emblems of his temporal as well as spiritual dominion over the earth."

The splendid but fatal distortion of the original idea of the Church, which culminated under such Pontiffs as

* Hallam's *Middle Ages*, chap. vii. (where the causes and operations of ecclesiastical supremacy are fully described.)

Innocent III. and Boniface VIII., carried within it the seeds of its own destruction. It was because it was a system based upon the ignorance and the credulity of men that it could not survive the era of the revival of learning and the invention of printing. Long before the Reformation, the pretensions of Rome were falsified by the developments of history. She had arrogated to herself the true unity, association with which was necessary to salvation; but events showed that this unity was nothing but a fiction and a dream.

The real and then formal separation between East and West was a violent and irrecoverable shock to the Papal idea of the Church. Ecclesiastical rivalry between old and new Rome dated from the division of the empire. Mutual excommunication had been, for causes half-political, half-theological, launched by the rival prelates, and had been followed by suspense of fellowship and intercourse.* The insertion of the famous "filioque" in the Nicene Creed throughout the West had embittered a controversial difference which in its beginning was inconsiderable.† Iconoclastic disputes had, in their time, arrayed parties in more than intellectual antagonism.

But the true reasons of estrangement were political, and such as were intimately connected with the consolidation of society and the advance of civilization. The old order had changed. Through the rise of the Teutonic nations to power the Western Empire had been revived in another form. Rome threw herself into the political current of the age. She sacrificed catholicity for a limited but vast and glorious supremacy; she turned her back upon the East, that she might devote herself to the new world which in Europe was emerging from the chaos of centuries.

* The reference is especially to Felix and Acacius, late in the fifth century.

† *Vide* the candid admissions of M. Ffoulkes in his pamphlet, entitled *The Church's Creed and the Crown's Creed*.

In the ninth century, the differences between Rome and Constantinople assumed a formidable shape. Each branch of the great tree of Christendom desired to be acknowledged as the main trunk. The Pope at Rome required that his jurisdiction should be acknowledged by the whole Church; the Patriarch at Constantinople resisted the claim, maintaining that supremacy had passed, with the person and government of the Emperor, to the shores of the Bosphorus. In the course of the dispute which arose between Ignatius and Photius as the two claimants to the see of Constantinople, both parties appealed to Rome; the Pope rose to the height of the occasion, and "by the power committed to him by our Lord through St. Peter,"* restored Ignatius to his bishopric. Through the varying fortunes of this controversy, Nicolas and his successors made the best use of their opportunity, but on the whole the result was unfavourable to their plans, and the virtual alienation of the East and the West from each other outlasted the formal profession of disagreement.

The final rupture between the two great sections of Christendom took place in A.D. 1054, when the Patriarch Michael, and those who adhered to him, were solemnly excommunicated by the legate of Leo IX., who laid the document of cursing upon the altar of St. Sophia. Various attempts were made in succeeding centuries to bring about a reconciliation, but without success. And since the failure of the endeavour, which seemed so promising for the interests of unity and of Rome, witnessed after the Council of Ferrara and Florence, the situation has been accepted, and the breach acknowledged as irreparable. The Holy Orthodox Church at Constantinople is the Photian schism at Rome.†

* Quoted in Milman.

† For an account of the real causes of the separation, see Stanley's *Eastern Church*,

From the time of the disruption between East and West, the assumption of the "note" of Catholicity by any outward ecclesiastical organization can have provoked only ridicule in the mind of an impartial observer. But the events of the fourteenth century were such as to shake the faith of Christendom, first in the necessity of Rome as the centre of the Church, and then in the much-boasted "note" of unity, even as considered within her own narrowed, European borders.

When the Papacy became a dependency of the Crown of France, it was not independence only that was sacrificed. The Roman bishops had urged persistently their claim to supremacy on this ground, that their's was the Apostolic See, founded by the prince of Apostles. But during what was called "the Babylonish captivity," which lasted for more than seventy years,* the Popes resided at Avignon under the patronage, and to a large extent subject to the influence, of the sovereigns of France. In what sense could they be the successors of Peter? Titular bishops of Rome, virtually they were merely bishops *in partibus*, not *in fidelium* indeed, but *alienorum*.

The end of this trouble was only the beginning of a disaster far more serious. There had been anti-popes in abundance from the third and fourth centuries onward. But "the great schism" of the latter part of the fourteenth and the earlier part of the fifteenth centuries, is the most important internal division which Latin Christianity has had to deplore. The memorable rupture was only closed by the determined attitude of the Council of Constance, which virtually deposed the three rival Popes. The spectacle thus presented to more than two generations, of a divided head, a divided body and a divided allegiance,

lecture i. "The true differences between the East and the West existed long before their formal disruption, and would exist in all probability long after any formal reunion. The disruption itself was rather a consequence than a cause of their estrangement," &c., pp. 23, 24.

* From the election of Clement V. (1305) to the death of Gregory XI. (1378).

must have produced upon the minds, at least of the observing and thoughtful among the laity, an impression strikingly at variance with the claim of unity which had been so constantly preferred by the ecclesiastics, and too unthinkingly acquiesced in by the people.

The Reformation was not only a return to the doctrinal teaching of the New Testament; it was also, to a large extent, the restoration of the primitive idea of the Church. That this may appear, it will be well to explain definitely what was the Papal or Roman idea, which expressed itself in the ecclesiastical system of the middle ages.

The Church of Rome admits the distinction between the militant and the triumphant Church, but ignores, if she does not reject, that between the Church visible and invisible. The Church, according to the standards and the theologians of post-Reformation times, is a society exclusively outward and visible, consisting of "a hierarchy instituted by Divine authority and the laity."* From this society three classes of persons are excluded:—the heathen, the heretics and schismatics, and the excommunicated.† With these exceptions, all mankind beside are reckoned as members of the Church: the *fideles* being such as profess the faith, and partake of the sacraments. It is acknowledged that in the Church militant are two kinds of men, the good and the evil; both alike belong to the *corpus*, or body of the Church,

* Perrone, in *Praelect. Theol.* The definitions of several distinguished Roman Catholic theologians are subjoined.

The Church "is a society of men united by a profession of the same Christian faith, and a participation of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, and especially of the one Vicar of Christ upon earth, the Roman Pontiff. . . . The Church is a society of men as visible and palpable as the Roman people, the kingdom of France, or the republic of Venice."—Bellarmine.

"Christi Ecclesiae nomine significamus societatem illam quam Christus Jesus instituit ut depositum asservaret cœlestis doctrinæ in terras ab se delatæ, atque organum seu medium simul esset, quo hæc ipsa doctrina conservaretur integra atque propagaretur."—Perrone, *Praelect. Theol.*

"Ecclesia est societas hominum viatorum, veram Christi doctrinam profitentium."—Bossuet, quoted by Perrone.

† *Vide* Catech. Roman.

whilst all the just, and only the just, are of its *anima*, or soul.* The *unity* of this visible and only true Church is maintained by the supremacy of the Pope, who is the "visible head necessary for the formation and preservation of the Church's unity,"† "the vicar of God upon earth."‡ Communion with bishops in the Apostolical succession is not deemed by Rome, by itself considered, communion with the true Church; as this succession is a fact which no heresy or schism can vitiate; the only valid test is subjection to the Holy See. Oriental and Anglican Episcopalians are relegated into the category of schismatics. When *sanctity* is predicated of this visible Church, it is explained that sanctity means set apart, and dedicated to God. Its claim to *Catholicity* is intelligible, but incredible. *Apostolicity*, an attribute added in the Nicene Creed, is based upon Apostolic doctrine and ministry, and involves infallibility. The Communion of Saints is the common participation in the privileges of the Church.

Bellarmino gives fifteen "notes" of the true Church, which he affirms to be wanting to Protestants. (1) The name of the Catholic and Christian Church; (2) Antiquity; (3) Long and uninterrupted continuance; (4) The number and variety of believers; (5) Apostolic succession of bishops; (6) Doctrinal agreement with the ancient Church; (7) Union of members among themselves and with the head; (8) Holiness of doctrine; (9) Power (*efficacia*) of doctrine; (10) Holy life of the founders, or primitive fathers; (11) Glory of miracles; (12) Light of prophecy; (13) The acknowledgment of opponents; (14) Miserable

* *Vide* Catech. Roman., and Perrone, Praellect. Theol.

† Catech. Roman.

‡ Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent. "Porro caput Ecclesiæ totius Christus est, sed Ecclesiæ visibilis, quæ est in terris, caput est Apostolicus Pontifex, qui locum Christi in ea tenet."—Bellarmino, Explicatio Symboli Apostol.

"Congregatio vocatur Ecclesia, non quod omnes fideles in locum unum sint congregati, sed quod congregati sint sub uno vexillo crucis, et sub uno duce, sive capite, Christo, et ejus universali Vicario, Romano Pontifice."—*Ibid.*

destruction of the Church's enemies ; (15) Temporal prosperity.*

These notes, however, have been reduced to the four already explained, as in the Nicene Creed : these being, Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, and Apostolicity.†

There have been for centuries in the Roman Church two opposed schools of theologians taking contrary views of the ultimate source of power in the great hierarchy. Whether distinguished as Liberals and Jesuits, or Gallicans and Ultramontanists, they have contended as to the authority inherent in the occupant of Peter's chair. One party has advocated the supremacy of the general councils as the representative body and as the mouth-piece of the whole society ; and has asserted the amenability of the Pope himself to an Œcumenical Synod. In practical support of this position, reference has been made to the contradictory decisions of successive pontiffs, and especially to the admitted prerogative exercised by councils in the deposition of popes. On the other hand, of late years, the party appears to have been growing in strength, which contends for the supremacy and infallibility of the Pope himself ; and to this party the British clergy in communion with Rome undoubtedly belong.‡ The safer theologians maintain that there is a co-ordinateness, if not equality of eminence and authority, attaching to pope and council.§

The fundamental distinction between the Catholic and the Protestant idea of the Church is in the view taken of the relation between the society professing Christian doctrine, and the doctrine professed by the Christian

* Bellarmine, *De notis Ecclesiæ in De Conciliis*, L. IV.

† Perrone, *Praelect. Theol.*, cap. ii. p. 716.

‡ *Vide* a recent sermon of Archbishop Manning, reported in the *Times*, of October 4th, 1869, where the Pope is monstrously decried as "the sole last supreme judge of what is right and wrong!"

§ "At ubi, et quomodo loquitur Ecclesia? Loquitur per os Petri, per eum, qui sedet in Apostolico throno, per decreta et canones generalium conciliorum."—Bellarmine, *Concio.*, cap. x., super. *Psalm.*, cap. xc. For the liberal view, *vide* *The Pope and the Council*, by Janus.

society. The definitions given by the Roman theologians are not based upon the true doctrine of Christianity held and proclaimed. The reason is obvious : Rome teaches that we are first to acknowledge the society or organization called the Church ; and then, upon its authority, to receive the truths of our Divine religion. She says to the inquirer,—Accept me as the authoritative, infallible representative of God, and then accept the whole body of Christian truth including the Scriptures, upon my simple but infallible *dictum*.

Protestantism, on the other hand, starting from the right and duty of private judgment, requires of men that they should examine for themselves and become convinced as to what is the revealed mind and will of God, and further, that uniting with those who accept that revelation, they should profess and proclaim it, and thus justify to themselves the claim to be of Christ's Church.*

One system bases the Word upon the Church ; the other bases the Church upon the Word.

There were Reformers before the Reformation. Most of those who lifted up a voice of protest against the Papal system were moved to do so by the flagrant abuses which could not be hid. A comparison between the teaching of Christ and His Apostles on the one hand, and the practices of Rome on the other, could not but

* "The difference is this :—The Romanist, while admitting that there is or ought to be in the Church an interior life, not cognizable by human eye, yet regards this as a separable accident, and makes the essence of the Church to consist in what is external and visible ; the Protestant, on the contrary, while admitting that to be visible is an inseparable property of the Church, makes the essence thereof to consist in what is spiritual and unseen ; viz., the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of Christians."—Litton, *The Church of Christ*, p. 70.

"The one true Church becomes visible, not in its proper unity under Christ its Head, but under the form of particular congregations or Churches."—*Ibid.*, p. 326.

"The Catholics teach," says Möhler, "the visible Church is first, then comes the invisible, the former gives birth to the latter. On the other hand, the Lutherans say the reverse, from the invisible emerges the visible Church ; and the former is the groundwork of the latter."—*Symbolik*, section 48. Möhler's fallacy is the confusion in which he has involved himself between logical and chronological sequence. In order of time, our relation to the visible Church,—i.e., our association with Christian people and our enjoyment of the means of grace,—may precede our incorporation in the invisible Church : but the spiritual society is the ground and the *rais n d'être* of the outward community, notwithstanding.

awaken dissatisfaction in every just mind, and indignant protest in every bold heart. Amongst the Waldenses and other sects, there was a clear perception of the groundlessness of the Roman claims and of the priestly system; they regarded the Papal Church as corrupt, if not apostate.*

The great English Reformer, Wycliffe, was the first who openly, in the presence of Europe, defied the authority of the Roman Pontiff. He began his protest by declaiming against the impositions, avarice and vices of the friars; but his bold, fearless spirit led him to question the principles upon which the organized Church was based. In denouncing the begging brethren, in arguing against the assumptions of the Pope to authority over the realm of England, Wycliffe enjoyed the countenance of the great: but he went far beyond the limits which a prudent and time-serving Reformer would have observed; he attacked the dogma of Transubstantiation, and assailed the constitution of the Church. According to his enemies, the monks, he taught that there is one only universal Church, consisting of the whole body of the predestinate; and that the Church of Rome was no more the head of the universal Church than any other.† His own writings bear out these charges. "The third part [after those glorified and those in purgatory] of the Church are true men that here live, that shall be afterwards saved in heaven, and who live here the life of Christian men." The "Church is mother to every man who shall be saved, and containeth no other." "All these things that popes do, teach that they are Antichrists. If they say that Christ's Church must have a head here on earth, true it is, for Christ is the Head which must be here with His Church until the day of doom."‡

* Mosheim's Institutes of Eccl. History, century xii.

† Ibid., Eccl. History, century xiv. (note by Murdock.)

‡ From *De Ecclesiæ Dominio*, in Tracts and Treatises of Wycliffe, pp. 74-6.

Wycliffe's doctrines, and especially that upon the Church, re-appeared in the teaching of the Bohemian Huss. Undoubtedly, the chief fault of which this noble man was guilty, in the apprehension of the Roman prelates and even of the reforming Council of Constance, was his daring and rousing opposition to the mechanical religion of the times. He believed and taught that there is a spiritual society, the living Church of Christ, of which even priests and bishops are no members, if their character and life be opposed to the Spirit of Christ. "He was the martyr," says Dean Milman, "to the power of the hierarchy; . . . his testimony was against that supreme ecclesiastical dominion, which had so long ruled the mind of man."

None of the pre-Reformation Protestants taught more clearly than did the famous John Wessel the true doctrine of Christ's Church. This, according to him, "is the communion of saints (*i.e.*, of persons still undergoing the process of sanctification and of persons already perfected) subject to Jesus Christ as their one true Head;" . . . "something essentially internal, as a fellowship of holy persons, whose unity rests on spiritual grounds, and not upon connection with one visible and supreme Head." . . . "The unity of the Church under one pope is only accidental and not necessary." . . . The inward nature of the Church, Wessel also illustrates, by showing that the living bond between its members is not an outward authority over their faith, but mutual love. "We must acknowledge," he says, "a catholic Church, but we must place its unity in the unity of the faith and of the Head, in the unity of the corner-stone, not in the unity of Peter or his successor, as the Church's governor." . . . "By the unity of faith, piety, and true love, the Christians constitute with us one catholic and apostolic Church, even though they should never have heard that there exists

such a city as Rome, or such a person as the Roman Bishop."*

Probably in the century preceding the Reformation there were many instances of practical Protestantism, both as regards doctrinal and ecclesiastical matters; and some may yet be brought to light by the industry of investigators. In its main features, the history of Juan de Valdes cannot have stood alone; and his later years (he died in 1540) strikingly exemplified the reaction against the sacerdotal and artificial system which he never formally abjured. During those years, when the devout and holy author of the *CX. Considerations* lived at Naples, he was virtually pastor of a Congregational Church in that city; for there were several persons of position, and even of distinction, who assembled with him each Lord's day, and listened to his learned expositions of Holy Scripture, and his tranquil and spiritual meditations upon Divine things.†

Hitherto, even those who had discriminated between the wheat and the tares, had not looked beyond the ecclesiastical pale for true believers; but the events of the sixteenth century led to the formation throughout a great part of Europe of Christian societies upon a new basis. When Luther preached against indulgences, which were sanctioned by the Pope, and therefore matters of faith, he was appealing from a human authority to the Scriptures and the Spirit. When he taught the doctrine of justification by faith, he was exalting the spiritual above the merely formal. When he appealed from the Pope to the Council, but stipulated that the Council should decide according to Scripture, he not only renounced the Papacy, but even the so-called Catholic system.

* Ullmann's Reformers before the Reformation, in Clark's Foreign Theological Library, pp. 482-5.

† Vide Life and Writings of Juan de Valdes, by B. B. Wiffen and J. T. Betts. For other anticipations of Congregationalism, vide Waddington's Congregational Church History.

He and his adherents found that they could not reform ; and they seceded. Although he shrank from the responsibility of forsaking a society which was in possession of Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the writings of the Apostles, and the succession ; he justified himself on the ground that Rome would not endure or permit the preaching of the pure Word of God. The same fact was Calvin's vindication for separation : " Instead," says he, " of the ministry of the Word, there prevails in the Papacy a perverted government, compounded of lies, a government which partly extinguishes, partly suppresses, the pure light. In place of the Lord's Supper, the foulest sacrilege has entered." Calvin also points out the absurdity of Rome in disregarding the doctrine taught, and placing the succession in persons.*

Luther started from the broad principle that Christian people as such are the Church, and that the condition of membership is faith and spiritual communion with the Lord ; but, perhaps influenced by the exercises of the Anabaptists,† he came to supplement this popular principle by laying down " notes" of the true Church. These, briefly stated, are three in number :—the two Sacraments and the Word. But to these he added :—the keys, the appeal of clergy or Church courts, (*Berufung von Kirchendienern*,) prayer, and the endurance of the cross. Whilst the Church has an existence *in cordibus*, that existence is recognizable among men by these *notæ externæ*. Accordingly, the Lutheran symbols regard the Church as *Inhaberinn der Gnadenmittel*, (possessor of the means of grace,) because in it the Gospel is preached, the Sacraments are administered, the Holy Ghost works, and the forgiveness of sins is enjoyed.‡

* Calvin's Institutes, book IV. chap. ii. † Schenkel's Article in Herzog's Real. Encyc.

‡ Bretschneider, Handbuch der Dogmatik der Evangelisch—Lutherischen Kirche, 8 cap. 3 abschnitt. He also says : . . . " Kirche nämlich ist ihnen die Gemeinde der Heiligen und Gläubigen, die in Gemeinschaft des Christlichen Glaubens, und unter der Regierung des heil. Geistes stehen mögen sie auch durch die ganze Welt zerstreut sein ; und ihre äusserlichen

Calvin, the great theologian of the Reformed party, like Luther and Melancthon, held the Word and the Sacraments to be the external signs of the true Church. Like the other Reformers also,* he laid stress upon the power of the keys, which he explains by three propositions:—(1) That the children of God whilst in the body stand in need of forgiveness; (2) That they can enjoy this only in connection with the Church; and (3) That forgiveness is dispensed by ministers in the Word and Sacraments.†

It was admitted, by both these great parties, that the Church militant cannot be kept perfectly pure. Holding that the notoriously ungodly should be excommunicated, Luther maintained that the Church was not vitiated by the presence of undetected hypocrites. Calvin taught the Church might be viewed, either as it is before God, or as it appears to us,—the assembly of professing Christians, including hypocrites and wicked persons; and he regarded as infatuated the Cathari, Donatists, and Anabaptists for denying, to societies containing unworthy Christians, the designation of “Church.”‡

One of the gravest errors committed by the Reformers was the relation they favoured between the Church and the State. Luther was perhaps influenced by the political events of his time, in approving the dependence, to a large extent, of the spiritual upon the civil office. The Lutheran Church has remained to this day the creature of the State; and, as a matter of course, Church discipline has fallen into abeyance. The Reformed party else-

Kennzeichen sind, dass die Evangelische Lehre unter ihnen recht gelehrt, und die Sacramente recht nach Jesu Einsetzung, verwaltet werden.” He quotes from the Apol. Aug. : “Dicimus existere hanc Ecclesiam, videlicet vere credentes et justos sparsos per totum orbem. Et addimus notas; puram doctrinam Evangelii et Sacramenta.” In the above account, use has been made of Muenchmeyer’s *Das Dogma von der sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Kirche*.

* *Vide*, for other examples, Palmer’s *Treatise on the Church*.

† *Institutes*, book IV. chap. i.

‡ For a succinct account of the Protestant view of the Church, controversially stated, *vide* Turretini *Compend. Theol.* Loc. xvi.

where, adopting the Presbyterian form of government, in Switzerland and in Scotland, made the same mistake. The ancient bishop disappeared, but his representative in the person of the superintendent or in the synod or presbytery was (though no longer under the power of Rome yet) often subject to the control of a civil and perhaps unspiritual ruler.

If England is not of all nations that one in which liberty of speculation is most freely claimed and accorded, it is certainly the one in which owing to the practical genius of the people, principles have been most freely embodied in actions and theories in facts. Hence the vast diversity, not of theological opinion merely, but of religious sentiment and ecclesiastical organization, which have for centuries obtained in this land. From the time of the Lollards until now, with but few intervals, the nation has been characterized by intensity of religious feeling and of Church life ; and it may be regarded as, in some senses, a microcosm of Christendom. The three governing principles, which have controlled the development of Christian association in this land, have been,—speaking somewhat loosely,—respect for tradition, reliance on reason, and reverence for Scripture. The reader will not need to be informed that we have no sympathy with the too-prevalent disposition to account as “the Church” one section alone—however powerful—of Christian society in England.

The Church established by law in these realms does not, as a Church, rank on either side in the great controversy between Catholicism and Protestantism. Dignitaries and parties within her pale have indeed fought strenuously on both sides. From Laud to Philpotts there have been prelates who have regarded their Church as resting upon the ancient foundation of the “succession,” and her clergy as a priesthood dis-

pensing supernatural gifts and performing supernatural wonders. From Hooper to Whately there have been bishops who have maintained the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, and who have considered themselves and their brethren ministers of the Divine Word, and guides of a voluntary community. It must be admitted that both parties have abundant justification for their positions in the formularies of the Establishment; and that, these formularies remaining as they are, neither party can fairly demand the exclusion of the other. It follows that, owing to the compromise in which Anglicanism originated, and the discordant elements of which it is composed, no one definite ecclesiastical idea can be said to be that embodied in the Church of England. She is a Janus, and her temple is always open.

Those members of the Anglican Church who have adopted the sacramental and sacerdotal theories which were so repugnant to the Reformers, have naturally enough viewed with favourable and even envious eyes the communities in which the leading idea of the Church for centuries has been the Catholic succession, with all that it involves. These regards have shown themselves sometimes in a lusting for the flesh-pots of Egypt, too strong to be resisted, sometimes in a habit of coquetting with the ancient system which has put the Anglican Catholic out of sympathy with the movements of his countrymen and the spirit of his age.

One bond of union, or rather one link of sympathy, existed between the English and the Oriental Churches: both alike, though at different periods, from different causes, and in different circumstances, having rebelled against the pretensions and withdrawn from the communion of Rome. From the reign of James I. a strong party, of clergy especially, in the Anglican Church, have repudiated the friendly attitude towards the Protestant

bodies of Europe which was exhibited by the prominent Edwardian and Elizabethan divines, and have sought every opportunity of stretching out the hand of fellowship to such churches as enjoyed the mysterious but priceless advantage of the Episcopal succession. Political reasons have always stood in the way of outward manifestations of friendliness towards Rome; yet there have not been wanting communications, cautious in themselves and futile in their results, between representatives of the two communions. The attempts of Christopher Davenport to prove the substantial unity of Roman and Anglican teaching; the correspondence between Bossuet and Leibnitz, which, though primarily affecting the Protestant Continental bodies, could not be indifferently regarded by English ecclesiastics; and the communications between Archbishop Wake and Dupin, are enough to prove that the interest in the re-union of Christendom was not extinct up to the time of the Hanoverian occupation of the throne of England.*

Those Englishmen whose hearts have yearned for the re-establishment of communion among Christians possessing the Catholic episcopacy, have often looked wistfully towards the great Eastern patriarchs. The immoveable and self-centred thoughts of the Oriental Churches have not as often been disturbed by reciprocal desires. There have been, however, signal exceptions. The active mind of Cyril Lucar led him, in the early part of the seventeenth century, to correspond, not only with distinguished representatives of the Protestantism of the Continent, but with such Anglican ecclesiastics as Abbot and Laud. The occupation of Constantinople by the Turks, and the consequently difficult position of the Patriarch and his clergy, gave opportunities to

* *Vide*, for a concise account of these and other overtures and negotiations, Plumptre's *Christ and Christendom*, Appendix A.

Englishmen to display a friendly spirit towards the Holy Orthodox Church. Several successive chaplains at Constantinople laboured to establish some kind of recognition between the respective Churches. A Greek Church was, towards the close of the seventeenth century, opened in London, and soon after there existed, for a few years, a Greek College at Oxford. But the most famous episode in the history of the relations in question was undoubtedly the negotiation between the nonjuring bishops and the "Catholic and Apostolical Oriental Church."* This negotiation never proceeded far, owing to the incompetency of the nonjurors to speak in the name of the Church of England, and came to an abrupt close upon the death of Peter the Great.

It is well known that of late years a very remarkable movement has arisen in this country in favour of what is called the Reunion of Christendom, but which is in reality the Reunion of the Anglican, Roman and Greek Episcopal Churches. This movement has received the support of many distinguished members of the High Church party, more particularly of their *tutamen et decus*, Dr. Pusey. It has seemed to many Anglican Catholics that their branch of the Church possesses peculiar advantages as a central and reconciling power. They can indeed scarcely boast of any remarkable measure of success in the efforts they have hitherto put forth : plain Englishmen might even say that they have been cruelly snubbed in high places. But they put the best face upon the matter, and are not slow in informing their friends of any successes they may have gained. The literature which this party has produced has been abundant in quantity ; volumes of sermons and essays by various writers, members of the several communions,

* *Vide* the correspondence published in *The Orthodox Church of the East in the Eighteenth Century*, by George Williams, B.D.

and separate works, tracts and pamphlets in profusion. Satisfaction the most confident in their own position, contempt the most sublime for all dissidents, are prominent characteristics of their literature.

The movement in question is most prominently represented by the "Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom,"—a Society established on the 8th of September, 1857. Two years ago this Association had between nine and ten thousand enrolled members, clergymen and laymen of the three Churches. But we are not told what proportion of the members consists of Anglicans, and we must be allowed to presume that few belong to the other two communions. The conditions of membership are not burdensome;—the offering of a brief and scriptural prayer for unity every day, and, in the case of a cleric, the offering of the "Holy Sacrifice" on the same behalf once in three months. One thing is very plain, that Protestants are intentionally excluded from the view of the Reunionists, as no Protestant minister would offer the "Holy Sacrifice" for any purpose, not believing that the Eucharist possesses a sacrificial character. And every opportunity is taken to repudiate such Christians as practise other than the Episcopal form of Church-government. Dr. Pusey is anxious to explain that the Lutherans, German and Scandinavian, are not to be regarded as part of the Catholic Church. They have no true succession, no priestly office, no participation in the body and blood, no real absolution, and are accordingly wanting in the notes of genuine Catholicity.* In a manifesto of the Reunion party issued in 1862, for the instruction of foreigners visiting the Exhibition of that year, the claim of the Church of England to be regarded as a member

* "The Swedish body has even yet retained more of ritual than we; but having lost the succession and the faith of the sacrament (with the power of administering it), it is but an empty show, the casket of a lost jewel."—*Essays on Reunion, Introductory Essay*, p. 77.

of the Catholic body is based upon her maintenance of the following doctrines :—the remission and regeneration through Baptism, the gift of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, the objective presence of the body and blood in the Eucharist, as well as its sacrificial character, Apostolical Succession, Absolution, and the authority of the Ancient Creeds.*

The Roman Catholics are ready to admit that the Episcopal Church of England has peculiar advantages for effecting an organic reunion, or rather for serving as the rallying point in an endeavour to attain it.†

But the terms on which the Romanists are prepared to welcome the projected alliance must be unpalatable in the extreme to the advanced Anglicans. These are willing to concede the primacy of the Roman bishop, and are forward to profess that by dexterous treatment the Thirty-nine Articles may be harmonized with the doctrines of the Council of Trent: they merely ask that liberty should be allowed in matters which are not strictly speaking “of the faith.”

But there is no real harmony between the views of the Church taken by the two parties respectively. The Anglican claims for his Church a position of co-ordinateness as related to the Roman and Greek communions. But what is the view taken of this claim by the Latin Church? It might be excused for asserting its precedence; but it unhesitatingly asserts its sole right to be regarded as *the* Church, and rejects, either with proud scorn or yet prouder politeness, the assumption of the anxious Anglican.

* Address of English Churchmen to foreigners visiting England.

† “If ever,” says Count De Maistre, “Christians draw together, as everything invites them to do, it appears that the movement must start from the Church of England. Presbyterianism was a French work, and consequently, an exaggerated work. We are too far removed from a worship too little substantial; there are no means whereby we can reach it; but the Anglican Church which touches us with one hand, touches on the other those whom we cannot touch; and although in a certain point of view it is exposed to the blows of both sides, and presents the somewhat ridiculous spectacle of a rebel who preaches obedience, it is, notwithstanding, in other aspects very valuable, and may be regarded as one of those chemical *intermèdes* able to bring together elements in their own nature discordant.”—*Considerations sur la France*, chap. ii. (quoted by Gondon).

Certain Roman Catholics having, without due consideration, joined the Society already alluded to, their conduct came under the notice of their bishops, who obtained a decision thereupon from the Holy Inquisition at Rome. The Holy Office admits that Catholics ought to pray that schisms and dissensions among Christians may be plucked up by the root ; and that all those who have forsaken the holy Roman Church, beyond which there is no salvation, may, upon forswearing their errors, be restored. But it insists that there is no other Catholic Church beside that which is built "*super unum Petrum in unum connexum corpus atque compactum unitate fidei et charitatis,*" and that it is by no means to be tolerated that the faithful should pray for unity upon the suggestion of heretics. The view of the Association, that Photianism and Anglicanism are two forms of the true Christian religion, is stigmatized as the height of pestilential "*indifferentism.*" Catholics are forbidden to be members of the Society in question.*

The same view of the inviolability of the Catholic unity is taken by the English laity, even by those most liberally disposed towards reconciliation. "No Catholic," says Mr. A. L. M. Phillipps de Lisle, "in advocating such a reunion, for a single moment would admit that the Catholic Church of Christ has ever lost her essential unity. The Catholic Church can no more lose her unity than she can cease to be. . . . No Catholic, therefore, in advocating the corporate reunion of any divided branch of Christians with the parent-stock, ever dreams of restoring *unity* to the Catholic Church, for she has never lost it ; but he does believe that such a re-union would restore

* *Supremæ S. Romanæ et Universalis Inquisitionis Epistola ad omnes Angliæ Episcopos.*

"If the union of the Anglicans with the Roman Church is intended and promoted in this sense, that they, laying aside all error and schism, are willing to embrace in sincerity Catholic doctrine, and to accept the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff as the Chief Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and the Visible Head of His Church, you may count upon the kindness with which this Holy See would be ready to treat with the Anglicans, whether collectively or individually."—Second Letter of Cardinal Barnabo to Mr. A. L. M. Phillipps de Lisle.

Catholicity to any such divided branch.”* What is this but to say,—*We* are the true Church; *you* are, if not heretics, yet undoubtedly schismatics; you are, however, at liberty to repent of your schism, and enter as converts the Church you sinfully forsook!

The two most striking phenomena as witnessing to a desire amongst Anglicans to promote reunion have been (1) the formation of the “Association for the Promotion of the reunion of Christendom,” and (2) the publication by Dr. Pusey of his “Eirenicon.” The response to the first on the side of Rome has been ably given by Dr. Manning, and to the second by Dr. Newman. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster quotes the decided prohibition of the Holy Office, for the direction of such members of the Roman Church as might be invited to enter the Association. He, however, recognizes with joy, as a proof of Divine grace, the fact that two hundred English clergy have applied to the Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office, expressing their desire for reunion. At the same time he remarks that the Episcopal Church represents only half of the English people, the Anglican school only a portion of that Church, the Anglo-catholic movement only a section of that school, and the Unionist movement only a fraction of that section. Much as he longs for unity, he affirms that it can only be offered upon unconditional submission to the living and perpetual voice of the Church of God. The faith is even more Divine than union. The Anglicans, according to him, place all religion in an imaginary faith of the undivided Church, the Unionists in an agreement of the universal Church founded upon a liberal interpretation of the Thirty-nine Articles on the one hand and the Council of Trent on the other. But *the* Church is inflexible in dogma, and can come to no compromise with those with-

* Essays on Reunion, pp 227, 228.

out her pale. *The Church* is infallible; that is, she perpetually holds and proclaims Divine truth by the perpetual aid of the Holy Ghost. Truth, then, must come first; unity afterwards. And if asked how unity is provided for, he replies that it is by the submission of all wills to the Divine Master by the intermediate position of the pastors of the Church, and especially the Supreme Pontiff. There is no salvation out of the Church; and of the Church the Anglican and Greek communions form no part. *The Church* never has lost and never can lose its unity. The Reunionists have laid great stress on the wishes and proposals of Bossuet. Dr. Manning quotes Bossuet in support of his own position. The contradictions which have arisen out of the Thirty-nine Articles are contrasted with the harmonious theology founded upon the decrees of Trent. It is plainly pointed out that to accept the Council of Trent, upon condition of interpreting it by our own opinions, is to sit in judgment upon it, not to submit to it. The inconsistency of the Anglican position is contrasted unfavourably with the simple Protestantism which is guided by the Scriptures alone. If the Anglicans were admitted into Catholic unity, retaining their views, they would be "*intus corpore, corde foris.*" The Anglican proposal to appeal from the Pope to a future Council is stigmatized as sacrilege. The Councils, like the Fathers, are only important as expressing the mind of the Church. Through its long history, the Church has been defining, not creating doctrines, by a series of declarations. This is the case with the Immaculate Conception. The Pope is infallible as the head and voice of the Church. Matters like the temporal power and the worship of the Virgin must not be imported into the controversy. To deny the Church's infallibility is to expose oneself to indifferentism and infidelity. As for the reunion movement, it is of

God only so far as it leads individuals to submit to the truth.*

Dr. Pusey, whilst maintaining most of those so-called Catholic doctrines against which Protestantism protests, has yet been for a generation the champion of the growing party which maintains that the Anglican is a co-ordinate branch of the one Church. He dissuaded his followers from joining the Church of Rome,—a step to which some of them felt almost impelled upon accepting the doctrines of the Tracts.† He resented the comparison which Romanists were wont to draw between the position of the Anglicans and that of the Donatists,—and this on his authority as a devoted student of St. Augustine. M. Gondon shows most forcibly in how many ways the Church of England has refused to accept the interpretations which Dr. Pusey would put upon her teaching.‡ The taunt is levelled at the Doctor that all he can claim for the English Church is the bare tolerance of the truth in conjunction with error.

The “Eirenicon” (in form a letter to the author of the “Christian Year”) is in reality a reply to a letter to Dr. Pusey published by Dr. Manning under the title, “The Workings of the Holy Spirit in the Church of England.” Maintaining, according to his own explanation, the unity of the Church, Dr. Pusey affirms that this unity is not destroyed by the interruption of intercommunion. He holds that the English Church maintains the true doctrines; and attacks the corruptions of Rome, especially the undue veneration of the Virgin Mother, and the attribution of infallibility to the Pope. After quoting Roman Catholic authors who have favoured a reunion of Christendom, and referring to certain overtures which

* *Vide* The Reunion of Christendom, a pastoral letter to the clergy, &c., by Henry Edward, Archbishop of Westminster, *passim*.

† *Vide* Pusey's Advice to Persons tempted to embrace Catholicism, dated August, 1845.

‡ De la Reunion, &c., par Jules Gondon, pp. 229, 230.

have been made in past times, Dr. Pusey propounds his scheme. The *minimum* of belief required by the Council of Trent is to be brought side by side with the *maximum* of belief contained in the Thirty-nine Articles,—*i.e.*, with those Articles interpreted in the Catholic sense, and an agreement may be found, which may be ratified in the eighth general council of Christendom. M. Gondon has well characterized the proposal of Dr. Pusey, in saying that its first condition would be that the Catholic and the Oriental Churches should in the first instance become Puseyites.*

In reply to the "Eirenicon" of his friend Dr. Pusey, Dr. Newman speaks of his correspondent with manly respect and with almost tender affection; but he complains that some portions of the work scarcely consist with its title: that he has "hurled his olive-branch from a catapult." The reply chiefly consists of an explanation of the worship permitted to the Virgin Mary, and a defence of the Immaculate Conception. It closes with the assertion that the honour of the Virgin is dearer to Catholics than the conversion of England! Only a few paragraphs at the commencement refer to the other part of the question: the different views taken by Romanists and Anglicans of the relation of Scripture and tradition are briefly explained; and the infallibility of the Papal See is not touched upon.

The response from Rome to the Anglican overtures being on the whole decidedly unpropitious, it is only natural that the Reunionists should turn with anxious hope to the Eastern Churches.† "It is natural, of course," says the Rev. C. A. Fowler,‡ "being children of the West, to turn our gaze wistfully to our own spiritual Mother

* *De la Reunion*, p. 270.

† The earlier English Churchmen regarded the Eastern Churches as at one with themselves in rejecting Roman errors. *Vide* Field, *On the Church*, book III. chap. i.

‡ *Present Prospects of Reunion*, in *Essays on Reunion*, p. 67.

first. Still, humanly speaking, we cannot help thinking that reunion with the venerable Eastern Church would be the better policy, and afford a better chance of success." This project, however, seems somewhat like the clutching at a straw by a drowning man. A Metropolitan of the Orthodox Eastern Church* admits indeed that when the English Church shall agree with his own "on the more important points, in which at present it manifestly differs from us," then matters of secondary consequence may be arranged. The editor of the "Essays on Reunion," who must indeed be thankful for small mercies, and who evidently "likes to be despised," prints in his volume an Essay by a priest of the Archdiocese of Constantinople, in which such crumbs of comfort as the following may be found :—"What has been denied, obscured, misrepresented, dropped or repudiated, which the Orthodox hold as from God, must be affirmed, set up again, accepted with sincerity, preserved and believed in, before reunion can be obtained ;" "All deviations from the Orthodox creed of Constantinople must be henceforth rejected and laid aside. That creed must be adopted and accepted without addition or subtraction, as it was formally promulgated." Protestantism must be renounced, and the Anglican orders must be confessed invalid.†

So much for the hopeless prospects of reunion between the several Episcopal Churches on the basis of common possession of the catholic truth and the catholic succession.

There has always been in the Reformed English Church, a party attached to its actual constitution, but not disposed to claim for that constitution either the authority of Scripture or the support of ecclesiastical tradition. Men who have thoroughly broken away from Rome, and who have had no disposition to return to her

* The Metropolitan of Chios, pp. 293, 294.

† The letter from the Archbishop of Constantinople to the Metropolitan of Canterbury, September 26th, 1869, is more conciliatory, but holds the same high ground.

obedience, but who, at the same time, have been well aware that their Church was rather the creature of circumstances than a society based upon primitive models, have sought for the justification of their position in the conclusions of reason and of expediency. The peculiar relations of the English Church with the State have required for their vindication all the skill they could command, and this skill has not been inconsiderable. The name of Hooker stands eminent among the chief theologians of our country; and Hooker's greatest work was the defence of his Church against the assaults of learned, zealous, and logical Puritans. The hopelessness of defending that Church by weapons drawn from Scripture, led to his magnificent eulogium of natural law, and his application of human reason to the establishing of ecclesiastical polity.* Opposed to the corruptions of Rome, sensible of the practical advantages of the actual Church of England, Hooker has ever been regarded with admiration by such as look upon religion as "the stay of all well-ordered commonwealths," and who are wont to ask, "What things are convenient in the outward public ordering of Church affairs?"† Fairly might a writer be credited with Erastianism who teaches that "there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any member of the Commonwealth, which is not also of the Church of England,"‡ and that "supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs" is given unto Christian kings by human right.§ This theory has been developed with ability and eloquence by Dr. Arnold in his introduction to the "Lectures on Modern History," and by Dean Stanley.||

Perhaps there was never an advocate of Erastianism

* *Vide* Ecclesiastical Polity, especially book III.

† Eccles. Pol., book V. sect. 1, 6.

‡ *Ibid.*, book VIII sect. 1.

§ *Ibid.*, sect. 2.

|| *Vide* Dean Stanley's Lecture, delivered at Sion College.

who went to greater lengths than Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury, the most able advocate upon principle of political absolutism. In that part of "*Leviathan*"* which treats of a Christian Commonwealth, Hobbes boldly maintains the supremacy of the civil ruler in ecclesiastical affairs. He defines "a Church to be, a company of men professing Christian religion, united in the person of one sovereign, at whose command they ought to assemble, and without whose authority they ought not to assemble." In accordance with this definition, he teaches that Christ has left authority in matters of religion to civil rulers, and that if a sovereign command conformity with what is deemed error, it is right hypocritically to comply.† "The civil sovereign, being a Christian, hath the right of appointing pastors."‡

The idea of their Church entertained by the bulk of the laity, and probably the majority of the clergy, of the English Establishment, is that of an institution determined in form by circumstances, commended by expediency and usage, and affirmed and legalized by Parliamentary authority. Erastianism is the creed of the generality of the so-called Evangelical and Broad-Church schools. Some English episcopalians, notably the late Archbishop Whately, put their own ministry upon precisely the same footing as the ministry of other denominations of Christians.§

The third influential tendency recognizable in Church life is the habit of reference to Scripture as the authority, and to the primitive Churches as the model. The Catholic relies upon the precedent of the diocesan episcopacy,

* *Leviathan*, part iii. chap. 39.

† *Ibid.*, chap. 42.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ "They (the Reformers) rest the claims of ministers not on some supposed sacramental virtue, transmitted from hand to hand in unbroken succession from the Apostles, in a chain, of which if any one link be even doubtful, a distressing uncertainty is thrown over all Christian ordinances, sacraments, and Church privileges for ever; but on the fact of those ministers being the regularly-appointed officers of a regular Christian community."—Whately's *Kingdom of Christ*, Essay ii. sect. 19. For the ablest exposition of the tenets of Nonconformists regarding the relation of Church and State, *vide* *Essai sur la manifestation des convictions religieuses, et sur la séparation de l'église et de l'état*, par A. Vinet.

which grew out of the primitive system ; if it did not, as he believes, prevail in the Apostolic times : his view of the Church is, accordingly, an outward, visible hierarchy. The Erastian may deem the form of government immaterial, and may not be concerned to vindicate a primitive origin for the organization with which he is connected : his view of the Church is an association which may have the recommendations of precedent, convenience, or reason. The former of these maintains what we believe to be, on the showing of Scripture, falsehood most pernicious: the latter has in his system no guarantee that the purposes of Church-life will be secured. We approve and advocate the retention of the Scriptural idea of the Church. By its adoption we believe the two great ends (in subordination to the Divine glory) of Christian association will be best promoted,—the reality of spiritual fellowship, and the promulgation of heaven-born truth ; and we base this belief upon our conviction that the hearts of Christians are the chosen dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost.

This has been, in the main, the Puritan, the Presbyterian, but especially the Congregational, idea.* All clear thinkers among us distinguish between the spiritual and universal society called “the invisible Church,” and the communities to which we give, in accordance with the New Testament usage, the name of Churches. It cannot be overlooked that any society of human beings, on whatever principle conducted, may include within it deceivers of others and even of themselves. Perfect purity of fellowship is not to be obtained by any means known to man ; but this is no reason why such purity as is obtainable should not be wisely and strenuously aimed at. No earthly government can maintain perfect order and peace

* For the Presbyterian system the reader may consult Bannerman's *Church of Christ*, and Cunningham's *Historical Theology*. For the Independent system, the works of Robinson, Owen, and Goodwin among the earlier, and those of Hanbury, Wardlaw, Davidson, Conder and Fletcher among contemporary writers.

among its subjects ; but that is no reason why laws should not be made and enforced for the repression of disorder and the encouragement of peace and liberty. Similarly, there are no means known to man whereby the wise exercise of power can in all cases be secured ; but this is no reason why the laity, the people, should be deprived of the right or absolved from the duty of self-government, in spiritual any more than in civil affairs. These appear to us the two great principles by which our position is differentiated from that of Catholics and Erastians. That the visible Church shall consist, as far as wisdom and vigilance can secure such a result, of those who are members of the Church invisible,—this is our first great principle. A society framed upon this law will contain those and only those who offer the fair evidences of personal religion ;—cordial belief of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, devout habits and a holy life. As none but God can search the heart, profession must be taken as the criterion of faith : with reference to the remaining qualifications, our Lord's test must be applied, " By their fruits ye shall know them." Respect for Scripture, the practice of prayer, attendance upon the means of grace,—these are the outward signs of devotion. The pure and righteous life is to be witnessed by the knowledge of men. Devotion may be simulated, sins may be secret : but God and God only looks upon the heart, and to His judgment undetected hypocrites must be left. In order to purity of communion, discipline must be maintained, and, in case of sin requiring such treatment, must take the form of censure, and even of excommunication. Unspiritual men will naturally detest principles which imply the duty of Church-discipline : it is well that they should detest them, and it is also well that the Church should disregard their detestation.

Controversialists have magnified the differences between

Presbyterians and Independents regarding purity of communion. We are of opinion that, so far as free Churches are concerned, (and no State-Church can in these days maintain discipline,) the Presbyterians in no important particular differ in this matter from ourselves. It is affirmed that, whilst Presbyterians are satisfied with a confession of faith and a life in accordance with Scripture injunction, Independents require evidence of spiritual regeneration. In the means employed to satisfy the Church of the fitness of a candidate for fellowship, there may allowably prevail difference of method ; but the qualifications for membership are, in the view of the two systems, substantially the same. Even the Presbyterian definition that the visible Church includes the children of Christian professors would be accepted by the majority of pædo-baptist congregationalists.

The second principle is that of self-government. This, prelacy and state-churchism alike dispute. The policy of Rome has been, from the beginning of the Papal system,* to withhold from the laity all control over Church affairs. In the Anglican Establishment, bishops and other dignitaries are nominated by the Government of the day, and the clergy are presented to benefices by the patron of the living, whether a Christian or a Jew, a saint or a reprobate. The people are allowed to elect one of two Churchwardens ; but this is the privilege, not of the communicants but of the parish. In opposition to these arrangements of hierarchical assumption or political expediency, we contend for the right and duty of self-government. The Church should elect its own officers and rulers and teachers, and should, either directly by popular vote, or indirectly through its representatives, administer its own affairs.

* "Les laïques assistaient au gouvernement de l'Église comme simples spectateurs."—Guizot, *Civilization en Europe*, lect. vi.

In the carrying out of this principle there are differences between Presbyterian and Congregational practices, not so easy of adjustment as those before referred to. Into these differences it is not our purpose here to enter. We have confidence in popular elections and in popular government; and, whilst admitting the inconveniencies which are inseparable therefrom, we believe these are fully compensated by advantages which history and experience alike should teach us to admire and appreciate.

We claim for our idea of the Church, that it is the idea of the New Testament, of the Apostles, of Christ Himself. The true and universal Church is no human organization, but the society of the elect and holy both in earth and heaven. Scriptural Churches are societies of men and women holding Christian truth, leading Christian lives, observing Christian ordinances; striving as societies to realize the Divine ideal; regarding one another with confidence and affection; regulating their own affairs; and co-operating for common purposes. We are confident that English candour will sooner or later recognize the strength of our position; we believe that growing wisdom will admit of more efficient association and more practical intercommunion; and we are not without hope that our principles may penetrate the mind of Christendom, and may, in all lands, mould and fashion and inspire the Church of the illimitable future.

That the Church of Christ should present to the devout and thoughtful mind an ideal and universal as well as an actual, local, and sensible aspect, is warranted by Scripture, and is required by Christian instinct and intelligence. Multitudes can testify to the inspiring and consolatory power derived from contemplating the fellowship of the faithful in this light. Grateful love to the Redeemer has ever been, and ever will be, the strongest and the foremost passion of Christendom. But between this affection and

that benevolence, that "enthusiasm of humanity," which is its proper fruit, there must be a love partaking of admiration, sympathy, and congeniality, and cherished with warmth and tenderness, directed towards the "holy, Catholic Church." The revealed purposes of Christ towards His people, the living characters, memorable situations and imperishable acts of the Church, the literature which it has created, the traditions of worship it has handed down, its attempts to express its thoughts and yearnings in the highest forms of art, its consecration of suffering and of toil, its patient expectancy of approval and reward, its penetration of all human interests and its hallowing of all human goodness;—all this and much more, acting upon the reverence, the reason, the memory, and the imagination, as well as upon the conscience of the Christian, tends to excite within him, not simply a belief in the universal Church, but an elevated, peaceful, and comforting affection towards that Church. Perhaps this is especially the case with those who minister to the spiritual well-being of Christ's body. Amidst the many trials to which they are exposed in the discharge of their ministry, whilst their best succour is derived from the sacrifice, the example, the spirit of their Lord, no mean measure of consolation is supplied by their conscious communion with the universal brotherhood. Amidst the vanity of the learned, the meanness of the rich, the bigotry of the ignorant, and the servility of the poor, they learn to lose sight of these partial and temporary imperfections as they recur to the Divine Ideal and the future glory of the spiritual Church of the Lord Jesus; and to this Ideal the actual Churches of the Lord may increasingly be conformed. As temporal and earthly governments become more secular, restricting their province to the physical well-being and the external relationships of mankind, there will be felt, amongst all who live a

life intellectual and spiritual, the deeper need for the existence of a society and communion more truly corresponding to the higher and proper social nature of man than is possible in monarchies or republics, guilds or clubs. There is no danger of the world learning to do without the Church, or of the Church ceasing to exert a mighty influence over the world. The human rules and customs and creeds of the Churches may be modified ; but the Church itself must remain : "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Sooner shall the flames of love sink into the ashes of oblivion, and the stream of human thought pause in its eternal flow, than the Church of Christ shall cease to engage the warmest affections, to attract and employ the highest intelligence, and to enlist in her service and consecrate with her blessing the noblest energies of man.

THE "RELIGIOUS LIFE"

AND

CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.

BY THE

REV. J. BALDWIN BROWN, B.A.

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IN the following pages the writer proposes to trace some of the broader outlines of the influence of the "religious life" on Christian society. Only the larger and more palpable features can in this place be dealt with. The delineation of the more subtle and delicate, but by no means least important touches, would demand a wider space, and might task the energies of a more instructed hand. But some thoughts on the main bearings of that form of life which for many centuries was recognized in Christendom as distinctively "the religious," may not be out of place, nay, may be signally in place, in a volume of Essays on Church subjects by Nonconformist ministers, of which *Ecclesia* is the title. For the Evangelical Nonconformists have been mainly, as was to be expected from their position and traditions, in the very van of those who have striven most sternly against Papal pretensions and Romish corruptions of the truth; and, as befalls all strenuous champions, they have been in no small danger of taking a narrow and one-sided view of the matter in debate. We have been too ready to confound the whole form and spirit of mediæval Christianity with the Papal system, in our most righteous and needful protest against Rome. The word Roman has been made

to cover everything in the constitution and movement of Christian society during the Middle Ages, which did not square with the Puritan interpretation of the Apostolic standards. But, in truth, Roman Christianity has only three centuries of history; dating from the time when the Papal See formally and finally rejected the principles of reformation. Then Romanism was born. Then the movement commenced, of which the dogma of Papal infallibility, hard as the more liberal Roman theologians may struggle against it, is the inevitable consummation. But up to the time of the disruption, and the development of what is after all but the great Papal sect, the movements of Christian society, under the inspiration of Christian ideas, though immensely influenced by the Papacy, were altogether too large, too deep, too human, too Christian, to be covered even by the ample name of Rome.

One of the most profound and important of historical subjects concerns the influence of the Roman See on Christendom. What would the Europe of the Middle Ages have been without the Popes? But we touch a still more vital question when we inquire, What would the Middle Ages have been without their Saints; and as the saintly image was distinctly monastic from the fourth century to the thirteenth, this is equivalent to the question, What would the Middle Ages have been without their hermits, monks, and nuns? St. Louis, in the thirteenth century, marks the dawning of a new era. The great saintly figure of the time is a king and a layman. It is the age of the birth of a vernacular literature in the Western European kingdoms; it is the age of popular movements which bring the great third estate on to the arena of political action; it is the age in which the West reaps fully the social and commercial fruit of the Crusades. Surely it is significant that in such an age one of the

ablest and busiest monarchs in Christendom won a reputation for saintliness, which few Churchmen can rival. It is prophetic of that sanctification of secular life, that passing forth of the "religious" idea into a wider world, which was the real meaning of the Reformation, and of all the most vital movements in the Roman Church during the last three centuries, down to the protest which Père Hyacinthe has just uttered in the interests of civilisation against the fatal policy of the Jesuits and the Pope. The influence of the Saint during the ages of which we write (and every monk and nun was saintly to the secular herd), was the influence of the Church in its most intense and concentrated form. And it re-acted on the Church most mightily, and continually nourished its power to influence and rule society. We must not confound the influence of the Church with the whole influence of the Gospel—that is, of the ideas and powers which Christ brought visibly to bear on mankind. That was a much larger matter, and must be sought equally in the development of the social life and political institutions of the nations which inherited, thanks largely to the monastics, the Christian traditions and polity of Rome. The "religious life" was, as it were, the electric jar into which all the most vital forces of the Church were gathered, and whence they discharged themselves, be it benignly or be it malignly, on society. And the Church represents incomparably the most powerful of the many influences which were moulding the life of Europe during the earlier Middle Ages. The Church is the great connecting link between Roman and mediæval society, between classical and mediæval literature, law, and policy. No secular man, for instance, can compare for a moment with Gregory the Great, as a link of vital connection between the ancient and the modern world. He is the Cæsar of the middle age of European history.

The formation of Christian society was the great problem of Providence during all those ages. Alas! it is the great problem still. But the terms of the problem have been constantly misunderstood, and by none more perversely than by the great evangelical party, the very backbone of which has been Nonconformist. The formation of a Christian community or communities within the bosom of the wider society, named the world in contrast, has satisfied our conception of what is to be desired and aimed at as the fulfilment of the Divine purpose of mercy to mankind. But if we read history rightly, something much larger than this has been the aim of the Divine workman through all these ages of Christian influence on the world. It is remarkable that every great attempt, and there have been many, to work out the problems of society as Church problems, and to compress the movement and progress of humanity within the forms which suffice for the expression of man's religious life, has utterly and lamentably failed. The experiment has been tried by all parties, under all conditions; by Puritans, and by the Roman Church, where the last and decisive experiment is in progress now. The most notable attempt perhaps, certainly the most resolute and promising, which has ever been made to govern society as a Church after our notion of Churches, was that of the Puritan exiles who founded the New England States. Long and resolutely they strove to manage their State as they would manage a Church meeting, and to make the Church life the basis of the whole secular life of the community. How it failed, and why it failed, we cannot stay to consider. The curious student will find in the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society much which will throw light on it, and on some of the most perplexing questions of these and of all times. But it did fail, and lamentably. And yet it is the true idea. It is what men

are always dreaming of and aiming at. From Plato through all the Christian ages some kindred vision of the perfect human order has floated before the constructive intellects of the world. But then we make our Churches too narrow; and the secular life, also a Divine thing if the Incarnation means anything, straining outwards as it grows, most blessedly bursts the bands, and compels us to an ever widening conception of the nature and range of the kingdom of the Lord.

But the formation of Christian society is quite another matter. It implies the creation of a social life, which should be Christian to its very foundations, which should be penetrated by Christian ideas and aims in its very springs; of which the mind of God as revealed in Christ should be recognized as the basis, and in which there should be the acknowledgment that the rights and duties of mankind must be referred as to their supreme standard to the Divine law. No intelligent student of history, one would imagine, could refuse his assent to the position, that this recognition of the Christian basis and constitution of society was the characteristic feature of the political and social life of the Western European nations during their formative ages—that is, from the fifth century, when the seed of the Teutonic nationalities began to be sown in the fertile, because disintegrated soil of the decaying empire, to the thirteenth, when we find them grown to their full form, and prepared to enter on their manly career. I call these national communities Christian societies, far as their actual life was from the Christian standard of perfection, for the same reason which leads me to apply the name to “the congregation of faithful men,” over which I have the honour to preside. They confessed Christ. I can very well imagine that those who have only glanced at the troubled surface of mediæval life, who have heard or read of its wild doings,

its fierce habits, its bloody strifes, its foul lusts, its gross excesses, its cruel tyrannies, its coarse blasphemies, may be tempted to exclaim, This confession of Christ seems to have been a very low, poor, carnal confession, scarcely worthy of the name. And surely they would be right. But I imagine that this is precisely what the angels are thinking about ours. I know not any Christian society upon earth which does more than strive in a very feeble and trembling fashion to order its life after the Christian law. And envy, hatred, malice, littleness, selfishness, worldliness, sins against which we are always witnessing, and from which we are always striving to free ourselves in our selectest societies with but partial success, may seem to the unseen watchers as grossly carnal as the strong, bold evils of mediæval society seem to us. None can hope to understand the Middle Age who cannot see that the effort to be Christian was the key to its vital development. And, therefore, without forgetting that the breath of the Divine Spirit is abroad in the very air around us, and streams in upon us by a thousand channels of nature and of life, we are justified in affirming that the Church, which held the Christian standards and cherished the Christian ideals, was the most powerful visible agent at work on the nations of Western Europe during the Middle Ages. In truth, the history of the Church, up to the time of the development of a national life and a national literature in those Western nations—which dates roundly from the thirteenth century—is in the largest sense the history of mediæval society.

The influence of the monastic principle on the world at large, including Asiatic, Jewish, Oriental, and Western monachism, will form an important chapter whenever comparative religion is scientifically studied, and its handbook is fairly written. But altogether the most vital and fruitful portion of the subject concerns the influence

of the Benedictine rule on the development of Western Europe, for with the life of Western Europe apparently is bound up the destiny of the world. The civilisation of the West is the product of three factors—Roman civilisation, the Teutonic nature, and Christianity. Roman civilisation, before it finally decayed and bequeathed its legacy to Christendom, had incorporated largely Greek and Oriental influences; in fact, it had gathered up into itself the whole ancient civilisation of the world. Hegel speaks of the middle as the Teutonic age. The question is much agitated now, Why did Rome decay? Luxury, tyranny, or as Mr. Seeley says, the sheer want of men, may account for it in a secondary sense. But these have to be accounted for. Had not the time come when a humanity of a different, of a deeper, larger, nobler type was needed to endure the strain which Christianity had brought to bear on men, and to fulfil the destiny which it had designed? In one sense, unquestionably Christianity was a conservative influence in the Empire. That is, it made the continued cohesion of the ranks and orders of society possible. But for the work of the Church among the poor and the enslaved, but for its tonic influence on the relations of men, the empire must have decayed much more rapidly. But in another and deeper sense it was destructive. It propounded a scheme of life and duty, which Roman society was simply incapable of working out to any high purpose. The effort, through the inevitable growth of the Church, strained the worn-out bottles to bursting; and finally the spirit, the genius of Christianity, passed out to organize for itself a larger, freer, and more fruitful life.

It found the materials, the stuff to work upon, ready to its hand. Philosophical historians have discussed the question as to how much of the special characteristics of modern civilisation is due to the Teu-

tonic * nature, and how much to Christianity. But that analysis can never be made. The proportions of father and mother in such children it is simply impossible to trace. Such products have always a double parentage, and in proportion to the power and worth of the product is the special adaptation of the parents to each other. Of all earthly marriages which have been made in heaven, there is none perhaps which has been so fertile as the union between Christianity and the Teutonic nature, leavened as it became in the fifth century—though the work had long been in progress—with the civilisation of Rome. There seems to be no form of human nature and human society so capable of receiving and nourishing the germs which the good Sower brought into the world as the Teutonic; at least, such must be our judgment with our present horizon. But the horizon is rapidly widening, and our judgments on many points which have become quietly accepted may be much modified before many years have passed by. But there is a very important sense, in which it may be said that the great work of Christianity opened when it came fairly into contact with the Teutonic mind. A comparison of the Europe of Charlemagne, or the England of Alfred, with the Empire under Irene, or Basilius the Macedonian, will illustrate the truth of the remark. Christianity simply failed to find the materials of a Christian society which should be permanent and fruitful, either in the Byzantine or the Roman worlds.

He who pressed onward so earnestly to the uttermost parts of the West had a keen prevision of the destined

* I use the word Teutonic in a wide sense, as describing altogether the largest and strongest element in the barbarian settlement of the West. It would not be possible here to attempt any discrimination of the different races of invaders, or to trace the influence of their native character in the institutions, habits, and features of the nations into which they were slowly developed, after amalgamating a larger or a smaller portion of the Roman population, which was itself an amalgam of a very remarkable and complex kind. I use the word German as expressing a predominating character, in the sense in which Hegel says, "The German spirit is the spirit of the new world."

path of the conquests of the Gospel. And there is something very remarkable, too, in the Westward pressure of the great secular precursor of St. Paul. It may be quite true that Julius Cæsar had little definite or far-reaching plan in his Gallic conquests. Indeed the splendid audacity of genius seems to have served him more effectually than large forethought serves less brilliant men. A far-reaching and patient schemer, one would imagine, would never have staked so much on the purest accident, as Cæsar staked when he threw himself with a mere handful of troops into the midst of formidable dangers in Epirus, at Alexandria, at Ruspina, and more than once in his campaigns in Spain. Still the great fact remains, that the instincts of Pompeius led him Eastwards mainly, while Cæsar pressed Westwards among the young, hardy, vigorous, prolific peoples with whom lay, though none saw it in that day, the future of the world. It is a strong sign of the supreme quality of a man, when his genius leads him to open a path which Providence intends the world to pursue. It may be said that Cæsar made the path, and determined by his career the Westward progress of mankind. Far from it. The path was that which for ages humanity had been unconsciously treading; nay, it had been marked out by the configuration of continents, the set of currents, and the spread of oceans, countless ages before a human footstep was set on its dust. Julius Cæsar all unwittingly was opening the path to the Gospel; and it is not a little remarkable that the liberal and inclusive policy of the Marian party, of which Cæsar and the Cæsars were the heirs, translated to the spiritual sphere, became the characteristic policy of the Roman Church, and was not the least important of the legacies which the Empire bequeathed to the Middle Age. But it was in the new lands, and among the new

peoples in the old lands, that Christianity had to seek its supreme triumphs. The new Adam of the Church found his helpmate in the Teutonic Eve.

These considerations justify us in dismissing with but slight notice in a brief Essay like this, the influence of the religious life upon the Oriental half of the Empire. Not that it was not both remarkable and powerful. The fact, too, that thence it entered the Western Empire and won its first triumphs in Italy, and especially in Gaul, lends to Eastern monachism a special importance. But it found no depth of earth in the East to nourish it. Rather, perhaps, the soil was exhausted, and needed to lie fallow for ages still unspent, before it could again become the theatre of a vigorous and progressive life. The monasticism of the extravagant, filthy, and prurient monks of the Thebaid, though not without grand and noble passages, was one thing; the monasticism of the rule of St. Benedict among the vigorous, laborious, and progressive Western peoples was another. Eastern Christianity died with its monasticism, perhaps died of it; Western Christianity lived through its monasticism, perhaps lived by it; and it has laid up in the inner cells of its life that vital force which will one day restore the mother lands of the Gospel to the visible kingdom of the Lord.

It is a mere truism to say that the origin of monachism lies deep in the constitution of our nature. Far from being the outgrowth of Christianity, the Christian monks are but as it were the upper ten thousand of the vast tribe. Every religion which has aimed at the solution of the problems of human life and destiny in the interests not of a caste but of humanity at large, has developed itself strongly in this direction. Wherever the conditions of human existence have been faced with tolerable courage, there has been a strong tendency to attempt their solution on the ascetic principle. Buddhism, the

great Pagan faith which has humanity at its core—I should call Islam by a nobler name—counts its monks by millions. In truth, the Christian monks have but wrought out to the fullest form and the highest use the institution which has, in all countries and in all ages, strangely attracted the thoughtful and earnest among mankind. Its origin is identical in all the religious systems which have cherished it, though its features have been as various as those of the peoples and civilisations through which it has held its career.

At the root of the institution lies the idea which enters very easily into the Asiatic mind, that the soul needs its special gymnastic culture as well as the body; and that just as athletes submit themselves to special and severe discipline, that they may contend successfully in the arena, so the spiritual faculties need to be drawn forth and strained to their highest tension by some special culture, which should be quite apart from the common duties and burdens of life. Beneath this view there lies the devil's own suggestion, that man's body and spirit, the earthly and the heavenly life, are mutually repugnant, are under different and conflicting lords, and that a high care for the one involves bitter contempt and mortification of the other. I call this the devil's own suggestion. Schism is of the devil, unity is of God; and it is this Divine idea of unity which it is so hard for man to grasp and be at rest. He easily believes in antagonisms, and adopts proscriptions. But, evil as the idea is in its origin and in its fruits, there is enough in our consciousness and in the obvious aspect of things to suggest it. That which is most profoundly of the evil one does not wear the acknowledged livery of evil. The worst tempters wear the angelic dress. Satan is transformed into an angel of light. And so the ascetic finds the reason for his austerities in the apparent con-

ditions of his own existence, and in a colourable interpretation of the Word of God. For let us do the ascetics the justice to confess that it is difficult to see how, with a nature like ours, in a world like this, earnest men, men not afraid of strife and pain, could avoid the attempt to solve the dark problems of life in the ascetic "way." Some such endeavour seemed to lie, like the Fall, inevitably in man's path. The history of the infant Church, even before the Apostles had passed away, reveals the genesis of the movement. The later epistles of St. Paul are full of sad previsions of its malignant work. As matter of history, men appeared even in the Apostolic Church, and won considerable influence, to whom the life of the busy, sinful world around them did not offer a training-school severe enough for the discipline of their spiritual life. They invented exercises and austerities which should supply a loftier training; they aimed at making themselves the skilled professors of the art of holy living, the Pharisees—and I use the word in no invidious sense—of the kingdom of the Lord.

I must pass by the question as to how far the ascetic discipline in Christendom was invented or imitated. There can be no doubt that Asiatic monachism had passed through all the stages through which Christian monachism was about to pass, and that the relation between the purely Asiatic and the Romano-Oriental world was much closer than has been popularly supposed. It is really marvellous to see how the mediæval and Roman development of Christianity was prefigured in poorer, weaker forms in the heart of Asia. Even the Mariolatry which burst forth in Europe with so intense a flame in the thirteenth century, and which has the closest connection with some of the noblest features of chivalry, has its parallel in the very farthest East. But we shall

only complicate matters by taking into consideration the possible origin of special forms of asceticism. It is enough that the tendency lies very deep in our nature ; and that in the nature of things, the human conditions being every where so much alike, it must take kindred forms in various countries, ages, and states of religious society.

In the earlier stages of the ascetic dispensation these exercises were carried on in connection with the ordinary scenes and activities of life. But after awhile, partly through the growing sadness and degradation of secular life, but chiefly, we may be sure, through the growing fascination of the object, the ascetic aspirants found that they could not bear the presence of their fellow-men, and betook themselves to desert places, the wilder the better, where they could carry on more freely what they not unnaturally mistook for the culture of their souls. The ascetic became an anchorite, one retired from the world, or an Eremite, a dweller, like the Baptist, in the deserts ; and there, drunk with the wine of his fanaticism, and far from the sobering influence of his fellows, he gave himself up to exercises and austerities, which fill us alternately with amazement and disgust. There were wide districts, especially in the Egyptian and Syrian deserts, which in the fourth century literally swarmed with ascetics. They burrowed in the hill-sides like rabbits in a warren, and studiously lowered the pitch of their lives, as far as food and shelter were concerned, to the level of that of the brutes.

The next step in the development of the monastic system was the association of these isolated anchorites in communities, for the purposes of fellowship and strength. How the transition was accomplished it is not easy to trace. Much, no doubt, was due to the influence of powerful and celebrated men like Anthony and Pachomius, who drew, by the magnet of their attrac-

tion, crowds of anchorites to their neighbourhood, over whom it became necessary to establish some kind of rule. But the main cause of the organization of the ascetic life was, I imagine, the sense of its growing power. It began to make itself felt as a very powerful factor in the life of the Church. It began to act mightily on society at large, and, being a power, it tended, by a natural and irresistible law, to take form and to become an institution capable of acting systematically on the world. The need of organization soon became imperative. That ascetic spirit which had been floating in a vaporous form about the Oriental Church, must condense, take shape, and enter the congress of life. The Eremites became Cœnobites, men living in common, under a common rule, with a common head; and then the development of the monastic institution fairly began. The organization of the scattered solitaries was attended by an immense increase of numbers. We may accept Jerome's authority for the vast concourse which attended a congregation of an order in the fifth century, without trusting too implicitly to the numeration of even so distinguished a father of the Church. In truth, a competent judge of numbers on a great scale is rare even at the present day. But there were enough of them swarming about the deserts and established about the cities of Egypt, to revive in another form the ancient sneer, that in Egypt it was far easier to meet with a god than with a man.

There is little that is noble or beautiful in a high sense in Oriental monachism. The Manichæan taint runs through it strongly and poisons all its springs. A bitter and savage hatred to the body as the organ of the flesh was its most pronounced feature. War against the body, with a view to mastery and use, was, *in the main*, the key to Western monachism; war against the body, for

hatred and revenge, was the key to that of the Orientals. But it will readily be understood that these broad statements are susceptible of many qualifying touches. Indeed it is well to bear this in mind in reading broad statements in any history. There is no lack of flowers of rare and exquisite grace scattered over this monkish waste. Touches of beautiful affection, acts of heroic courage and constancy, begem what were else a nauseous history. The monks of the Thebaid were, at any rate, not afraid of the worst which the world could inflict on them. Athanasius found in them the most constant and courageous champions of the truth of the Incarnation; and it was mainly by their help that he won the greatest and most pregnant of doctrinal victories. And always there is the grand spectacle of a moral force which was recognized as superior to their own, by those who wielded all the forces of this world at their will. It lent dignity even to the withered form of Simeon on his pillar, and was most significant in an age of brutal violence and lust. It would be simply impossible to measure the worth to the world, during those stormy and contentious ages, of the reverence which a man, by mere moral force, could exact from its chief leaders, and of the ruling influence which he could exert over those who shaped its destinies. Still, on the whole, it is a dark, sad history. Viewing and handling the body as a beast, begets, insensibly, a beast-like habit of mind and spirit. The man who sets himself to expel the beast by tormenting his body, in the end simply transfers it to the soul. But the institution grew mightily. It had a strong fascination for the weary, worn-out world, this life which seemed to draw its inspiration from a new and heavenly spring. As the world's misery deepened, the fascination became more resistless. But there was a rottenness at the core of this Eastern monachism, and growth but developed it ;

it went with its eyes and organs inward, and self-enfolded nothing can live. Age by age the Eastern institution grew more boneless and bloodless, and now, if Oriental travellers are to be trusted, the dullest and dirtiest sloths that are slinking about Christendom must yield the palm to these monks of the Eastern Church.

The monachism of the West looked out of itself and lived. There is a clear, bold, working aspect about it from the very first. Its origin is naturally obscure. All great things spring, like the corn, "one knoweth not how." The seeds of it were in the air, and the constant intercourse of the West with the East transported them somehow and dropped them in congenial soil. Towards the close of the fourth century it began to attract attention. Perhaps Athanasius, who owed much to the monks, and who was at Rome in A.D. 340, with some monks in his train, introduced it. More important to us is the fact that the Romans, with their clear, strong sense, took to it with difficulty. At the funeral of Blesilla, a young Roman nun, who was said to have died through excessive fasting, they were for throwing the "detestable monks" into the river. Monkery, we see, needed to be baptized with a new spirit before it could root itself deeply in the West. From the first, however, it may be noted that in the Western monasteries, communion was the leading idea, not isolation. No doubt the hermit's cell was the core of the institution, as in the East; but in the West it tended rapidly to organization, and long before Benedict of Nursia arose, the leading Western monasteries, especially in the south of France, were exercising very powerful influence on the culture and the social and political life of their times. They made a stern fight, too, against over rigid fasting. "Much eating is gormandizing among the Greeks, but it is natural among the Gauls," they pleaded, in mitigation of Oriental

severities. There was no lack of even excessive asceticism, but the genius of the people and the set of the current of thought was in favour of a more robust and fruitful life than the Easterns aimed at. From the first it was clear that monachism in the West would enter more fully into the public life of mankind.

Still, until the beginning of the sixth century, it is difficult to speak of it as an institution in Western Europe. It had little form and method; it was liable to great lapses and swift decay. The organizing power was wanting. The units were there, but there was little unity. Each monastery did what was right in its own eyes; many of them grew rich and wanton, and in the general decay of everything in the Empire, in those dark days which were at once the death-bed of the Roman and the cradle of the modern world, there was no little danger that monachism would be swept down with the wreck.

Then arose Benedict of Nursia, and settled, by his celebrated rule, the character of Western monachism, for all time. Like all great captains of men, he had the eye to see and the strength to grasp the special need and longing of his times. He gave the permanent form to what was already the instinctive tendency of the monachism of the West. His power, like that of all great masters, lay in interpreting to itself that spirit which was abroad in society around him, and giving it a wider and freer range. The facts of his life cannot here be dwelt upon. His struggles, sufferings, and stern endurance during thirty-five years at Subiaco we cannot even glance at. Then he took up his pilgrim-staff again, and settled himself at Monte Cassino, near the head waters of the Liris, and there founded the monastery which was destined to exercise a mighty, we might almost say a supreme influence on the development of the Christian

world. There he thought out and published the celebrated rule which bears his name, which simply brought out into clear form and order the ideas which were floating in the powerful and practical minds of the founders of monachism in the West. For powerful they were, as well as practical. We do not need M. de Montalembert's brilliant rhetoric to teach us that the cloister was, on the whole, no shelter for the weaklings of society, men easily dashed and bruised by the rough world around them, and safer in a cell than in a battle-field or on a throne. The great monks bear full comparison with the greatest soldiers, statesmen, and kings. We may lament or condemn the form of lifewhich they elected, and see clearly whitherward it tends. But we must bear in mind that it was for ages the chosen field of action of some of the very strongest, ablest men, and the noblest, purest women whom God sent forth into the world.

One is tempted to some impatience when our divines and scholars, to whom "sitting under their own vine and fig-tree, no man daring to make them afraid," is the ideal of a social state, speak with lofty superiority of a mode of life which men like Benedict, Severinus, Columba, Columbanus,* Bede, the two great Gregories, Boniface, Anselm and Bernard deliberately elected, and loved with a devotion so passionate that they were ready at every moment to seal their vows with their blood. We speak with compassion of the superstition which drove such "good men" to bury themselves in a living grave. I can fancy St. Bernard passing with a smile of yet loftier compassion through our city streets, reading our leading

* The great Celtic Missionary monks followed a different and rival rule with strong peculiarities of its own, though based on the same ideas as the Benedictine, and aiming at the same results. The rule of Columbanus is more in the key of the Asiatic monastic system than that of St. Benedict. Several features of Buddhist monachism seem to be recalled by the Celtic missionary from the far West—a likeness which it might be interesting further to explore

journals, visiting our Exchange, looking into our banks and assurance offices, our pauper infirmaries, and our casual wards, or the gold room in New York. Perhaps the superstition which we pity would not be the saddest thing in his sight, fresh from the visions of the celestial world. At least let us be sure that there is nothing which calls mainly for pity in a life which had a strong attraction for some of the ablest and bravest spirits whom the world nursed for ages ; and that, however monks might grovel and sin, and make their profession a bye-word of scorn through Europe, a high and noble inspiration was at the heart of a movement which occupied such splendid energies, and left such marks on the higher development of mankind. There can be no doubt that the rule included a vast crowd of weak, dreamy *fainéant* devotees ; but, on the other hand, it would be hard to find, in any other sphere of human activity during the Middle Ages, a grander company of clear, strong, firm, and far-sighted men. We are bound to believe in this life as one which had a specific rightness of adaptation in its times, or its secret will remain veiled.

Benedict drew up and promulgated a rule of monastic living, which may be regarded as the complete expression of the Western mind with regard to the nature and the aims of the religious life, for it met with immediate and almost universal acceptance, and has ruled the monastic world for 1300 years. It is well known to the most casual students of monastic history that its three ruling ideas are self-abnegation, obedience, and labour. Perhaps, next to the novitiate, on which I shall touch presently, the great distinctive feature of the Benedictine as compared with the Oriental rules, is the importance attached to manual and agricultural labour. Incidentally this became a matter of large importance to Europe, and it reveals the clear, practical direction of the institution from the

first. Not that it was at all a new thing in monastic history. Even the most self-enfolded of the Oriental monks had some notion of a duty to scratch the ground around his cell, and raise the herbs which he needed for his daily food—that is, if he was so far from the true perfection as to prefer salads to grass. In the rule of St. Basii and generally in the ideas of the leaders of the movement, labour is duly honoured. But it never assumed in the Eastern system the dignity and importance to which it from the first attained in the West. Benedict and his followers went to work with axe and spade, and cleared the wilderness where they were resolved to settle. Order, culture, fertility, a land smiling under their tillage, the wilderness and the solitary place made glad by them, the desert rejoicing and blooming as the rose—these were the fruits of the institution which delighted them ; these were the outward and visible symbols of the inner culture, the clearing of the moral wilderness, and the rearing of the flowers of patience, charity, and hope on the bosom of the waste, at which they aimed, for which they pined, but which a nobler and wider discipline alone could assure. The hours allotted to labour, as compared with the hours devoted to reading, under the rule, were as seven to two. And at a time when the culture of a great part of the Roman world was carried on by slaves, this rule of Benedict was the resurrection of industry. For the want of this industry mainly the Empire was dying, or indeed dead, but the monastic rule lifted it from the dust again, and restored it to its throne as the mother and queen of all the arts and graces of life. Not that this monastic influence was the only power at work in the sixth century to raise industry from its degradation, and to restore to the weary, wasted, slave-crushed soil that energy of free hearts and hands which alone could draw forth its gifts and smiles. Great

forces never work alone. The revolution which in the main transferred the possession of the soil of the West from the effete city-haunting Roman, to the free, robust, country-loving German, was like the baptism of a new life on the exhausted hills and plains. The conquerors became the free cultivators of the fields of Britain, Gaul, and Italy; and the land broke forth into singing under the tillage of their sinewy hands. But the rule of St. Benedict began the reformation within the bosom of the Empire. He commenced the regeneration of an industry which it needed a nobler humanity than the Empire could furnish, to establish and to crown.

The invading races were the willing agents of this great industrial reformation. They wrought through broad provinces, as the monastic institution wrought in select centres, to renew the physical beauty and fertility of Western Europe. We wander among the graceful and splendid ruins of the great Benedictine houses, with which in time our country and Europe generally was begemmed; and we are prone to indulge in a sarcastic reflection on the keen appreciation of natural charms which the choice of the sites exhibits. The taunt is somewhat threadbare, but we meet with it still even among those who ought to know the truth. Tintern, Bolton, Kirkstall, Fountains, and Melrose, are familiar names to most of us. They are the fairest scenes even in this fair land. The great abbeys abroad occupy mainly kindred sites. They seem to claim the softest vallies, the greenest pastures, the most fruitful hill slopes, the most teeming rivers, as their own. These gardens of Europe are the Benedictine eulogies. Fountains Abbey stands in a Yorkshire valley, of which one is tempted to complain that it is too exquisite, too suggestive of luxurious plenty, security, and repose. But turn to the picture which the valley presented to the first monks who invaded it in search of

a dreary wilderness, where they might be sure of finding hardship, hunger, and toil. They came out of a wealthy and luxurious abbey, to search for these ; and they settled in the valley where in time they reared their splendid fane, because they found there a dismal marsh, and a thick forest, with no clearing big enough to grow them even a few sheaves of corn. Search the records of the settlement of Benedict at Subiaco or Monte Cassino ; Columbanus at Luxeuil, or Bobbio, his chief disciple, at St. Gall ; Abelard at the Paraclete ; Bernard at Clarivaulx,—and you will find substantially the same history. These scenes, which seem so fit to be the homes of a soft and indolent quietude, were chosen because of their wild and desolate sternness ; and they were tamed to their present beauty by the strenuous toil of a peasantry, the like of which no other history reveals. Perhaps the followers of Joe Smith present to us the fairest image of it in point of methodical and disciplined industry, in these modern days. These men believed that each fen which they drained, each copse which they cleared, each acre which they brought under the ploughshare, was an acceptable offering of pious hands and hearts to God. At least this belief animated the leaders ; the mass of the followers, at any rate, caught the habit, and to catch a good habit is something for the great mass of men in such a world as this. It would be idle, of course, to contend that this was the clear character of monastic labour through the Middle Ages. Monasteries grew fearfully rich, and cultivated vast estates by the labour of a peasantry bound to the soil, like the secular lords around them. But the primal *motif* never wholly failed them : agriculture was always a main concern with the great religious communities ; and the quasi-consecration of all that belonged to them, secured for them some share of immunity from the horrors and devastations of war ; though the protection

was more imperfect than is generally supposed. Something of the noble motive to labour which inspired the first founders, continued to animate their relation to their labourers and dependents, and a long book would be needed to set forth even in outline, the debt which European agriculture owes to the monks of the Middle Age.

Up to the time of St. Benedict the monastic vow remained under the power of the man who made it. He was simply a layman who chose to do certain things, and when he was tired of doing them he might depart and do what else he pleased. St. Benedict established the perpetuity of the vow, under the most solemn and awful obligations; at the same time he provided a long and severe novitiate. But from that time "Once a monk, always a monk," became the law; and it is easy to see how immensely this perpetuity of the vow increased the power of the system as an influence on European society. The novice being received at length and with difficulty into the brotherhood, made it his supreme concern to offer up, in every possible form, the sacrifice of himself. Self-denial is one thing. A man may deny himself in the free exercise of his loftiest faculty, and realize an inner freedom of the personal will and fulness of personal life in the effort. But the real aim of the monastic discipline was to leave a man no self to deny. There was its essential weakness. The Buddhist is the only monk who grasps the whole meaning of the institution, and dares to set clearly before himself the idea which is behind every high form of the ascetic life. It is a perpetual draining of the springs of the personal being; it strikes a death-blow at that which makes man worth redeeming, in the hope of making his redemption more complete. Could it have run its course unchecked, unmastered by other and yet higher human forces, it would have killed at the very

root the development of society, by leaving for development nothing but machines. But in saying this I am far from disposing of the institution as a thing of virtue and power in its times. Our most powerful medicines untempered are poisons,—nay, our most choice and stimulating food. And it is quite possible that there may be a high use of teaching and influence in an institution, which if allowed to run its whole course would be fatal to society. I suppose that we are most of us doing the world some service by institutions and methods, which, if they had the whole field to themselves, would be fatal to its life. A dark thought sometimes crosses one, as to how things might go, if the whole world were suddenly turned into a huge Independent Church.

I am compelled in this brief Essay to abstain from quotations or reference to authorities. But I should be glad if any of my readers, who may feel interest in the subject, will look into this rule of St. Benedict, or even such portions of it as M. Guizot or M. Montalembert will give them, and see how absolute was this self-abnegation, this individual suicide. The obedience which the monk was to render to his abbot was of the most abject and unquestioning kind. Pure, passive, lifeless obedience; except that it was by an act of high and pure volition, under circumstances which secured its perfect freedom, that the man made himself a slave. Slave was the title they gloried in, and servile punishments for breaches of rule were willingly and even joyfully endured. Here was the central core of the institution, in the West at any rate—the complete surrender of the self to one who seemed to stand to the monk in the place of God. M. Guizot traces the abject submission to the habits of the Empire. It is unsafe to question the *dictum* of such a master; but it seems to us to come from a much higher spring. We must try to do justice on both sides to this

Benedictine rule. Nothing can be more suicidal in the long run than this idea of self-surrender ; but it is important to understand how earnestly Benedict sought to secure that it should be voluntary in the very highest degree. He established the perpetuity of vows. But he balanced it, as he believed, by the length and the severity of the novitiate. In that severity there is no sign of distrust or weakness, no doubt of the attraction of the religious life, to the men and the women who were fitted to do honour to it. In truth the difficulty was to exclude them. So intense was the passion for this life that there were times when it seemed to threaten the destruction of society. The rule spread with marvellous rapidity through Europe. Placidus carried it to Sicily, Maurus to France, Augustine probably to England ; and towards the close of the eighth century it was so universal as to cause Charlemagne to inquire whether any other rule existed throughout the vast dominions which he had subjected to his sway.

The monks at first were simply laymen. The process by which, almost in spite of themselves, they became not clerics only, but the elect of the clerical order, it may be interesting briefly to trace. Primarily the monastic instinct tended to seclusion from the world, and from all offices of natural, political, or ecclesiastical duty. For many generations the monks, as a class, retained their lay character ; and the most earnest of them kept themselves rigidly aloof from the offices and services of the Church. In truth the ascetic would be likely to hold himself superior to ordinances of all sorts. He worshipped in an inner sanctuary, and his priesthood refused the imposition of an earthly hand. To him, Church officers and offices would appear in the light of worldly tempters and distractions, drawing him away from the rapt contemplation of things spiritual and divine, wherein was his life.

The well-known sentence of Cassian, who had been in the East, and knew Eastern monachism well, ranks bishops with women as among the monk's most formidable foes. Still, from the first, complications, sometimes of a serious kind, arose. Monks of a certain class, covetous of power, pressed into the priesthood; and able monks were coveted, and sometimes caught with guile by scheming bishops, of which curious tales may be read in the literature of the times. But, on the whole, the lay character was for a time successfully maintained. To escape the bishop's crook, which tended terribly to become a claw, was a far harder matter.

The fifth century was an age in which the episcopal order consolidated and extended the power which it had been gaining—usurping, some of us would say, but it grew so entirely out of the tendencies of the times, and the set of the currents over which man had no control, that the word usurpation but partially applies—and which the peace of the Church assured. The fifth century records are full of legislation which had for its direct object the subjection of the monks, both in the establishment and conduct of their monasteries, to episcopal control. In the fifth century monachism was establishing itself in the West with little method or uniformity, and naturally, having no *point d'appui*, the monks in the various districts fell under episcopal sway. But as it grew in influence, power and wealth, the monks bore with growing impatience the supervision of an official whose grade in holiness they regarded as lower than their own. Material considerations, too, soon complicated the matter. The monasteries gathered treasure; the bishops of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries had itching palms. The monks, as the ecclesiastical legislation amply proves, suffered grievous spoliation, and even violence at their hands. The clergy had already utterly lost their

independence, and were held in servile, and often brutal subjection. But the monks fought hard for freedom. They had a standing ground of their own, which the clergy lacked, and they offered an organized and sometimes armed resistance. The struggle lasted with more or less vehemence through three centuries,—on the whole, perhaps the darkest ages of human history. The tenth century was dark enough, and may seem to dispute the palm. But it had the memory of Charlemagne, and an organizing idea in the Holy Roman Empire, with Otto the Great to give it substance, to lighten its darkness ; while it is hard to see what was shaping itself amid the confusion and demoralization of those earlier times. The struggle terminated at last in favour of the monks, by the intervention of the Papal See, from which in those ages many deliverances sprang.

But while the monks were battling with the bishops for some measure of independence, a great change was passing over their relations to the Church. As they felt their power, honour, and authority increase, they lost something of the primal ascetic inspiration, and began to aspire to official functions. The way would be opened by practical difficulties which would constantly occur. A numerous company of monks, settled at a distance from the church where the ordinances and sacraments were celebrated, would be in some perplexity ; partly from distance, and partly from the feeling of superiority to the common mass of the faithful, they would strive to get what came to be called a chapel consecrated in their monastery, in which, at intervals, a priest might officiate. But this intrusion of a ghostly man, of an inferior order of ghostliness, would cause some soreness in the monastery, especially as the clerical jealousy of the monks increased. Then they would naturally seek to have one of their own order consecrated as their priest, to minister

to them in holy things. And thus it actually befell. But this would introduce a distinction, an inequality where equality was fundamental; and so it came about that the whole body of the monks began to aspire to the clerical office, and gradually, by the sheer force of the virtues which, whatever we may think of them, were most honoured in those times, they made their way into the front rank of the ministers of the Church. It is impossible to fix the dates of the various steps of the transition. Early in the seventh century, Boniface IV. proclaimed them "more than fit" for the clerical office, and from that time we may regard them as on the high way to supreme clerical power. They conquered their position by the sheer weight of their intellectual and spiritual superiority to the priesthood, in those points which struck the imagination of that rough but ideolatrous age. It was, however a long, stern battle with which we Nonconformists may have some sympathy, though we denounce vehemently monastic ideas; under very different forms there is something essentially like it in our history.

A notable era in the development of Western monachism may be marked by the name of Boniface, the great Anglo-Saxon missionary to Germany, and on the whole probably one of the ablest and most far-sighted statesmen of the eighth century. He had the eye to discern and comprehend the bearings of two rising powers which were destined to play a prominent part in European history. He saw that the true cure for the miseries of the Merovingian kingdom was the assumption of the regal power by Pepin, the founder of the Carolingian empire, and he attached himself with zeal to the fortunes of that powerful family, with very important results, which we cannot stay to trace. And at the same time he saw that a principle of order, not of the purest or most perfect kind—Boniface knew that full sadly—but still powerful, prac-

tical, and full of promise for the future, was to be found in the extension of the power of the Papal See ; and he lent the whole weight of his remarkable character and influence to strengthen and enlarge the rising authority of the Popes, which, the art of the forger being as yet in the bud, had still in it some original spiritual force and life. It was in devout submission to the Papal See that he carried on his missionary labours ; the bishoprics which he founded, after the fashion of his own See of Mainz, were placed solemnly under Papal control, and it was as the representative of Pope Zachary that he anointed Pepin king. In fact, Boniface was the leading statesman in Northern Europe during the whole of that era of transition, and the institutions which he mainly helped to found were destined to a mighty success.

But we must not linger over the political interest of the times, though we may note in passing—and it may help us to estimate the motherly influence of the Papacy on the Churches of the West during the earlier ages of her supremacy—that the two Western Churches which were most under Papal influence, which were founded and nursed by the Popes, not only developed themselves most rapidly, and became distinguished for culture and missionary zeal, but were the first in their full maturity to cast off the Papal yoke, when the mother had degenerated into the tyrant and plague. But the career of Boniface had in many remarkable ways a powerful influence on monasticism, as his copious correspondence reveals ; and in founding the monastery of Fulda in 744 he placed it directly under Papal protection. Thenceforth the monks began to see in the Papacy the power which would uphold them against the tyranny both of the bishops and of the secular lords. From that time the monks and the Papacy begin to draw together in closer relations, and in the end the whole army of the monks,

during the palmy days of the institution, whether for good or for evil we shall enquire in due course, became the army of the Papal Church.

But it is time for us to enquire a little more closely into the natural history of this institution, which, though it connects itself with the whole ascetic movement which plays so distinguished a part in the history of all the great world religions, has a distinct and powerful individuality, which is Christian alone. Whence did it spring? M. Guizot—and no student of these times can mention his name without profound deference to his judgment—holds that “it was not to any ecclesiastical combination, nor even to the movement and the particular direction that Christianity might impress on men’s imaginations, that the monastic life owed its origin. The general state of society at this epoch was its true source.

It was tainted with three vices, idleness, corruption, and unhappiness. Men were unoccupied, perverted, and a prey to all kinds of miseries. This is the reason why we find so many turning monks. A laborious, honest, or happy people would never have entered into this life.” “Of the absolute submission of the monk to his abbot, which St. Benedict enjoined,” he says, “of a surety Europe received it neither from Greece, ancient Rome, the Germans, nor from Christianity, properly so called. It began to appear under the Roman Empire, and arose out of the worship of the Imperial Majesty.”

More recent writers trace the institution largely at any rate to the same spring. But the mainspring of all great human movements is attraction and not repulsion. To understand them we must search for the force which attracts, and be sure that the repellent stands much lower in the scale. And it will be needful to seek in some deeper and diviner inspiration the origin of an institution, which not only wielded for ten centuries a

tremendous power, but also maintained the spring of its strength unimpaired so long. It cannot be doubted that the utter wretchedness of life under the decaying Empire, the weariness and heart-sickness to which Pilate gave such dread expression, helped the movement mightily. But nothing on this scale and of this force is primarily a refuge. Nor do the annals of asceticism in Central Asia, under Islam, or in Western Europe, tend to prove that the attraction of the monastic life is in inverse proportion to the industry, security, and prosperity of the secular life of the times. We may live to see a powerful monastic movement, under new forms but with the old spirit, developed out of the intense activity, the restless liberty, and the splendid prosperity of our nineteenth century life.

There are some very startling sentences in the New Testament. "Nowhere," says Hegel, "are there to be found such revolutionary utterances as in the Gospels."

"And behold, one came, and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me."—Matt. xix. 16, 17; 20, 21.

"Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother, and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."—Matt. xii. 47-50.

"And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit Blessed are they that mourn Blessed are the meek Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness Blessed are the

pure in heart Blessed are the peacemakers Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake : for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad : for great is your reward in heaven : for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—Matt. v. 1-12.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it : but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."—Luke ix. 23, 24.

"Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours ; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind : And thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."—Luke xiv. 12-14.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."—Luke xiv. 26.

"And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests : but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead ; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee ; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."—Luke ix. 57, 62.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul : and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common ; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."—Acts ii. 42, 47.

Nor are these vague words. They are sustained to their uttermost literal meaning by the life of the Lord.

We are familiar with their purport; alas! so familiar that we can hardly realize the startling emphasis with which they would fall on the unaccustomed but eager ears, which were listening in those days to the Word of Eternal Life. Men believed profoundly that those words were spoken on earth by the Lord of everlasting glory, and they were taught by inspired lips that this Life was the Light of the world. Was it not most natural, and indeed inevitable, that those on whom the power of the higher life descended should take these words in what seemed to be their simplest sense, and try what would come of an honest endeavour to work them out as literally in the life. It would be hard to attach too much importance to the miserable condition of the times, which yet *we* may realize more clearly than the average men and women who lived in them. To us, for instance, the life of a city Arab would seem less tolerable than death, and yet multitudes contrive to live it, age after age, without being driven to any desperate effort to escape from it. Still it was miserable enough to make the cloister look heaven-like in contrast. The pages of a writer like Salvian (though he wrote with a purpose, and, what is still more ensnaring to writers, a theological one) contain sufficient to explain how dear was the vision of a refuge in his days. The storm of bloody and brutal war was abroad; no home was sacred, no treasure was sure. Each spring of domestic or social pleasure was polluted; the darkness deepened as the Empire staggered on in its blind misery; and the gathering night seemed to be unlit by one ray of hope. Quiet souls needed a shelter from the storm; the tender-hearted needed some security against the dread vicissitudes of life; the thoughtful needed a retreat where they could carry on their peaceful labours; the highminded a life which could give free play to nobler energies than could

occupy themselves with battle, avarice, or lust. But beneath all these, at the heart of all these, the living germ which all these helped mightily to stimulate and develop, we must place—the imitation of the Lord Jesus.

When Epictetus urged his disciples to set before them some man of supreme excellence, and to imagine themselves always in his presence, had he quite forgotten how bitterly he had complained that no true Stoic could be found, no man in whom he could discern the realization of his ideal. But myriads, nay millions of his fellowmen had found One whom they could at once worship with the profoundest reverence, and love with the most passionate devotion ; One who had laid hold on all which they believed to be the higher element of their nature, as the magnet lays hold on steel dust, and drew them by a resistless spell into the path of self-abnegation, self-devotion, and ministry to mankind, which He had trodden himself to the last extremity of shame and death. The great mass of mankind, the ignorant, the poor, the enslaved—shut out inevitably, not by the jealousy of the philosophers in any wise, but by the very nature of things, from the wisdom of the schools—had found, or as Paul says had been found by, a Being who stirred and swayed them with a force and absoluteness till then unknown ; and who inspired them with a love so passionate and absorbing that poverty, bonds, wounds and death were no longer terrible, but beautiful and glorious, if they might but express the depth of their devotion to their Saviour, and translate them more swiftly to His sphere.

This passionate personal love to Christ is a feature of the Christian life of the early centuries, which no wise student of their history will underrate. And it manifested itself in forms of imitation often very wildly extravagant, but not altogether marvellous, to those who know to its

depths the passion of human love. The stigmata of St. Francis, whatever may be the truth of that marvellously attested phenomenon, are really but the culmination of what the higher class of monastics—and these are the men to be studied—were pining and panting after through all the monastic ages. To imitate Christ in the form of His life, while they drank inwardly its inspiration, was their highest thought and hope. And it was inevitable surely, that the Christian life should, in the most earnest, take the form of a studious outward imitation under the constraint of an absorbing passion, before the world could rise to the comprehension, partly through this experiment, of the inner meaning of the life of Jesus, and the true character of its influence on mankind. The poverty of Christ, His simple trust, like that of the birds and the lilies, His homeless lot, His virgin life, were all made the objects of eager and passionate imitation. To live as He lived, poor, homeless, wayfaring, and apart from domestic bonds and joys, was the ideal of the Christian life which the first ages cherished; and it would be easy to show, from the writings and sermons of the great monks through the whole monastic period, how this remained the supreme inspiration—nay, it is vivid in many a great heart among the “religious” to this day. We are tempted to think that the larger spirit of Christ’s teaching, His miracle at the marriage feast and the like, might have taught them a nobler lesson about life, than that which they drew from the study of some outward forms of the life of the Lord. But it is wonderful how purblind the best of us are. How many thousands of earnest intelligent Christians in this nineteenth century, with this tale of the marriage of Cana open before them, stigmatize wine as the unholy thing, and denounce it as the devil’s gift to the world.

So we must be patient with those monks if they saw

but one thing at a time, and that the most outward and visible thing. It was needful to the true unfolding of the life of humanity, under the influence of Christian ideas, that this experiment should be fully tried, and that the world should see what would grow out of that form of the imitation of the Lord Jesus. Let any one study the history of the conversion of St. Anthony at one end of the scale, and of St. Francis of Assisi at the other, and he will see in the almost identity of the two narratives, how profoundly this idea of the imitation ruled the noblest minds through the monastic ages, and was the real root of many of the wild fantastic movements of those intense, thorough, and ideal times. To this root, too, must be referred that profound submission of the monk to his abbot, which has been traced to the slavish habits of Imperial Rome. The abbot was to the monk as Christ. That entire obedience to the Father's will, which is so conspicuous a feature in the life and discourses of the Lord, they delighted to imitate in their submission to the man whom Christ had set over them—who was to them as a present God. Men pined, in the confusion and darkness of their intellectual sphere, and in an age when the constructive instinct was strong, for visible, tangible manifestations of unseen spiritual powers. The abbot was this to the monk, the Pope became this to the Catholic world. In both spheres the submission was abject and destructive; though ennobled for a time by the vision of some more awful form behind both abbot and Pope. But it was simply idolatrous—the endeavour to grasp within some form which could come within the cognizance of the understanding, the substance of the unseen but ever-present Lord.

As with all idolatries when young, an intense fervour and energy attended its earlier developments; but, as with all idolatries when old, it fell inevitably as the generation

ran on, into miserable riot, impotence and despair. In the earlier Christian ages, it is not too much to say that Christendom was fairly drunk with the new wine of the Spirit. A new power from heaven had fallen upon men, and filled them with rapture. Nothing is more notable, in the comparison of the Christian and the pagan literatures of the first and second centuries, than the tone of exhilaration which breathes through the one, and the sadness, the hopelessness, which breathes through the other. This probably, quite as much as the "*non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus*," explains the power which Christianity wielded from the first over the mass of mankind. But the spirits of the prophets, the men into whom this new wine of the Gospel entered, broke loose from the prophets. All the wild antics of the Stylites and their kindred were just the effect of untutored passionate souls to work off the excitement. The fine frenzy prolonged itself through the Middle Ages; and it was not till the dawn of the Reformation that the fermentation was ended, and the pure clear wine of Christian thought could be offered to the world. It took Christendom 1500 years fairly to master its position, to attain to the rule of its own spirit; and then it began characteristically enough to fortify and instruct itself for the higher and calmer stages of its growth, by opening afresh the writings of St. Paul.

These considerations suggest the most strongly-marked feature of the influence of "the religious" on Christian society. They were from the first the distinctly Evangelical element in the Church. Some of my readers may shrink from the association of a term so sacred, with the ideas and habits of life which we are now considering. But I call that Evangelical in religion, in the true sense, which lives by vital personal fellowship with the living Christ, and which utters its innermost experience in the

words, "*The love of Christ constraineth me.*" This has been the secret spring of power in the leaders of all Evangelical reformations and revivals. I believe that Mr. Matthew Arnold is quite right, and that their doctrinal ideas were nothing in the account, compared with their vivid sense of the love of the living Saviour, and their faith in His work for them and for mankind. The word Evangelical has just now an evil savour in the nostrils of the Philosophers. To speak frankly, looking at our little world, I do not wonder at it. But I do wonder that men of culture can lift their eyes and range over the wider world of Christendom, without seeing that the great force which has lifted that world and moved forward its progress at the critical eras, has been the hold of the living personal Saviour on the hearts both of the great leaders and the great masses of men. God forbid that we should ignore the mighty influence of culture, of the sweetness and light which rain down from the intellectual sphere. If the Evangelical spirit could have succeeded in playing the Cain to this gentle Abel of thought, which is its chronic temptation, it would have left itself but a barren humanity for its kingdom. But could culture succeed in dispensing with the Gospel, as it is striving to ignore it now, the humanity which it would have left to rule over would be simply—dead.

The two movements are in truth as closely related and as needful to each other as the two hemispheres. If we set the Evangelical foremost, it is simply on the principle that "the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." And we hold that during the ages in which the conditions of human life and thought made it desperately difficult for men to hold clearly in view the essential truth of the Gospel, "the religious," by the passionate earnestness of their devotion to the Saviour, by their studious imitation of the form of His example,

by their vivid preachings, writings, and biographies, did keep some warm though distorted image of Him who is the very core of Christian doctrine, before the world. And again I urge, that the age is coming, nay is already come, which will be as startled at the image of Christ which we have been presenting during the doctrinal era which is closing, as we are at the image which was presented in a monastic life. We judge these men as if the pure form of the truth were ours at last. We shall live to be as ashamed of the impurities which we have mixed with it, as Boniface was of Pope Zachary, Bernard of his friend Eugenius III., Catherine of Siena of Gregory XI., or Luther of what he saw under Julius II. at Rome. We have not yet reached the point which might justify us in judging the monastic life by our standard. If we compare it with the standard of Christ, let us place ourselves beside the monks as we judge them, and own for them and for ourselves a double shame.

It would be easy to quote from the writings of the great monks down to quite recent times, a series of passages full of intense and passionate devotion to the person of the Saviour; and those at all acquainted with the sermons of modern monastic preachers, will know how deep a strain of Evangelical thought and passion breathes through their words. The question of course arises how far their principle helped or hindered their witness for the living Christ. We can see how much it distorted; we can measure the shame which the inevitable degradation of the Order brought upon His name. But we find something similar in all Churches and Church movements. And when we see a certain tone of thought and feeling conspicuous in the great leaders of a school through successive ages, and tinging the whole current of its life, we are bound to believe that there was something in the principle of the school which fostered it. Nor is it difficult

to see how their mode of life and their special abnegations made the living Saviour very real and very dear to them ; though the same habit of life might as easily lead men away from Him in these more instructed days. Fearful as were the evils which the monks wrought in Christendom, we cannot question that in the formative ages of its growth this witness to the Lord Jesus left a large balance of blessing to be placed to the account of the "religious life."

Having glanced thus at the most vital element of their influence, we may perhaps best take a rapid survey of the whole field, by considering :

1. The part which they played in relation to the visible body—the Church.
2. Their relation to the inward and outward life of men—the human affections, interests, and duties.
3. The service which they rendered incidentally to the culture of Christendom, and the unfolding of the life of secular society.

We may safely speak of the monks as on the whole the devoted soldiers of the Roman Church. For good or for evil they served her with singular fidelity ; and our estimate of their influence will largely depend on the value which we attach to the influence of Rome. A very noble idea was at the root of this devotion to the Papal chair. It was as the Roman See rose to be representative of the unity of Christendom, that the monks devoted themselves to her service. The homage of so many noble minds was really an aspiration ; they would realize through Rome the visible kingdom of the Lord. That Christianity was the World-Religion, was a fixed idea in the Church. The Roman Empire inevitably suggested a world-empire as its sphere. The conversion of Constantine was a vast step towards its realization. A temporal Prince at once stepped into a headship of the Church-State, which was regarded as a kind of vice-

gerency of Christ in the world. We must not suppose that the one form in which the unity of Christendom presented itself to the ablest minds through the Middle Ages, was the kind of theocracy which floated before the vision of Gregory VII., Innocent III., or Boniface VIII. The position which Constantine assumed, and which the Church continued to recognize,—Gregory the Great wrote to Maurice as to his master, and Leo bent before Charlemagne as he crowned him at Rome,—made the Emperor the unquestioned head of the Christian world. The servility of the Church is often commented on,—in a measure unjustly. The conception of a complete Christian State, a visible political body, which should yet be the kingdom of the Lord—a body of which the Emperor under Christ should be the head, and of which the Church should be the inspiring soul—is the key to the aim and effort of Christendom through the Middle Ages, in which, from Charlemagne to Frederic II., the Empire plays such a distinguished part. The Holy Roman Empire floated before the minds of men as a vision of a complete, peaceful, blessed society. Churchmen slowly entertained the idea of a united Christendom under the rule of a Priest. As a spiritual society, they had no desire to “be unclothed, but clothed upon” with a body, a great world-empire, in which the Church, as a spirit, might dwell, and by which it might work. Aquinas sums up the deepest thinking of the Middle Age in the sentence, “*Potestas secularis subordinatur spirituali, sicut corpus animæ*” But this recognized the necessity of a body with organs and a head. And the imperial power, during the early stages of its growth, had no stronger support than the ablest minds of the Church. How passionately a great layman could cling to the idea the “*De Monarchià*” of Dante reveals. But the dream was palpably a dream. Not in that way could a kingdom of Christ be realized in the world.

The Papal power rose on the wreck of the Empire of the West. The Popes became heirs of the name and influence of Rome. Their spiritual sway over the Western nations was a more mighty thing than the Roman sword. With them was the new power which was organizing the West, and they grew naturally with it. But howfar did the higher pretensions and aims of the Papal imperium grow out of, or at any rate by, the palpable inability of the mediæval Empire to serve any high Christian purpose to the world? If we contrast Dante's dream of the Empire with its history under all but the ablest rulers,—nay under the ablest, for the splendid reign of Frederic Barbarossa is among the saddest of all,—we shall see that the Empire, complicated with German politics, was palpably unequal to its mission; and that there was ample room for the pretensions of the purely spiritual power to grow. Charlemagne, whose favourite reading, Eginhard tells us, was in the works of St. Augustine, *præcipueque his qui De Civitate Dei prætitulati sunt*, had left a great ground-plan, which was full of promise. But the times were against it; the very outlines of it were quickly obliterated; it was but a mutilated image which Otto the Great, Henry III., or Frederic I. restored.

On the wreck of the temporal unity of Christendom rose the idea of the Imperial power of the Church. The steps by which the Church rose to supremacy, we cannot even in outline trace. A terrible history of usurpation, fraud and shameless forgery may be gathered from the records of Church history. "Janus" parades them in one startling chapter; dealing too tenderly with Nicholas I., who laid the foundation on which Hildebrand built the Empire of the Church. But forgery does not explain a power which was wielded with such tremendous force for ages; and which M. Comte—who considers that the positive philosophy, "being as free from monotheistic as

from polytheistic or fetish belief," is singularly able to form a calm judgment—regards as "formant jusqu'ici le chef d'œuvre politique de la sagesse humaine." There must have been a great preparation in the public mind of Europe for the usurpation ; there must have been a sense that the advancing power would fill a vacant throne, and restore a lapsed idea ; and these must be fairly taken into the account, when we would estimate the work of the Papacy in its times.

Nothing is so difficult to deal with in brief as the influence of the Papacy on Europe ; for nothing can be more multiform than the phases which it assumed. This Papal power is really a variable quantity, like the prerogative of the monarch during the formative ages of a constitutional state. But it is easy to trace a steady growth of pretension and power, from the days when Gregory the Great wrote humbly to Maurice, and worse than humbly to Phocas, to the day when Boniface VIII. issued the bull, *Ausculata, fili* ; or when seizing a sword he declared, "It is I who am Cæsar ; it is I who am Emperor ; it is I who will defend the rights of the Empire." But this was the first stage of the decline. When the emissary of Philip le Bel struck the old man with his mailed hand, he marked an era in the history of the Church. Philip le Bel, one of the most unbeautiful figures in history, was yet a national monarch, with a nation behind him ; and with the rise of the national spirit the Papacy began to decay. The death of Boniface was followed speedily by the seventy years Captivity ; then came the councils of Constance and Basle, and then things ripened rapidly for the Reformation. But the growth up to the fourteenth century was constant, powerful, and sure. Its relation to the true progress of Christianity is not easy to trace.

We must first recognize as a fundamental fact that

Christianity was at work equally on secular and on spiritual society. But the main visible instrument of influence—the invisible we cannot measure—was in the hand of the Church, and during the central period the Church was represented by Rome. During these ages it would seem that some vast organized system was needful to keep before the eye of secular society, however imperfectly, those great Christian ideas which would ultimately render it independent of Church-systems external to it, for all time. We are growing to this in England, we have not reached it yet. The transition from the Church-system of the Apostolic age to the establishment of Constantine, must be regarded as in the strictest sense a Fall. Christianity fell as man fell, and like man, to rise again. God makes the Fall a stage in the unfolding of a larger, richer life. The question is how far during the stormy Middle Age could pure spiritual ideas find room and air to breathe in our world? Of old, because they could not live here in their pureness, God enclosed them in the ark of the system of the Jewish Church. Then came an era of peace and culture. They stepped forth, and in their naked power and beauty moved through the world. The age of peace and culture closed. The world plunged into wilder confusion; the fertile communion of men and peoples became difficult and rare. Then the pure truth of the Gospel buried itself again, this time in humanity, and through a vast, powerful, authoritative system wrought with what freedom and force it might on mankind.

The Roman Church during the Middle Age was just a rude battery of force, the main-current of which was Christian, which had to act on a state of society too hard and gross to be acted upon by more subtle and spiritual means. The Gospel sheltered itself within this citadel, and thence it strove to stir the sluggish spirit of the

times, and to bear such witness as was possible, through the organs at its command, against the more crying evils which were desolating society, and for justice, temperance, mercy, and charity, as graces which were still dear to God and blessed for man. And when, as again and again occurred, this great institution fell into more deadly evils than those against which it was set to witness, and repeated the vices and miseries of the Empire on a more tremendous scale, how dense then, how awful became the darkness of the world!

But one thing the Church accomplished, though at a cost morally, which makes it difficult to strike the balance of gain: she wrought the facts and truths of Christianity into the very texture of the intellectual, the social, and the political life of humanity, and impressed that Christian character on our civilisation which, poor and imperfect as it is, may be its distinguishing glory, and which, once inwrought, abides for all time. In the conflict of the Church with the secular power, the Christian spirit seems often on the side of the prince; and the principles for which our Henry II., or the Emperors Henry IV. or Frederic I., contended, were of vital importance to the freedom and progress of Christian society. Still, on the whole, the things which were of *supreme* importance were in the custody of the Church; and, despite Mr. Lecky's able argument, we must conclude, that though the ages of her sway were little fruitful in a high Christian sense, yet they were the parents of a great future; they were ages in which ideas and habits of action were being wrought into the very heart of European society, which will Christianize humanity to the end of time.

Without the monks, this work of the Church would probably have been impossible. They were, as a body, an army devoted to her service. Celibates—after the manner of all standing armies—they were at the dis-

posal of the Church to maintain her pretensions, to fight her battles, and to do her work. The triumph of the principle of celibacy, under Gregory VII., threw into the hands of the Church a power of enormous magnitude. It kept the whole spiritual force of Christendom in hand, as it were, and under one head. And terrible as were the evils of Church pretensions and assumptions, and of the wrongs and outrages which were perpetrated in the most sacred Name, we hold that it was better, not for those ages but for humanity at large, through all time, that that form of the kingdom of Christ should be wrought to the fullest possible perfection. It has charged humanity with precious experience, which will remain its *κτῆμα ἐς αἰὲν*, when the pains and struggles of its acquisition are forgot. The monastic orders, mighty helpers in the great work, share fully in whatever glory or whatever shame attaches to the rule of the Church through the Middle Age. They were its most consistent and powerful champions; it completed its organization by adopting their principle, and without them it could never have accomplished its work.

The development which we have traced is like a series of supports, each rising higher and looming larger than those in front, to bear up the body of Christian truth and influence against the pressure of the times. First, we have the clergy with their sacraments—their's distinctly, not Christ's; they go down before the pressure, and, in the fifth century, are in rapid decay. Then behind them rise up "the religious," to reinforce them, and both, for a time, hold on their mission with new power. Then the monks get rich and corrupt, and fall into the hands of spoilers. Behind them rise up the Popes, who sustain awhile and revivify the spiritual movement. Behind the Popes rises up the whole structure of the Mediæval Church, in which the Pope is the organ of the thought

and influence of the whole clerical world. Then the Papacy grows magnificent and wanton, rich in possession and prerogative, but poor in honour and love. Behind it, in the hour of its chief splendour, rise up the Mendicant orders to sustain it. Little dreamed Innocent III., as he walked that evening on the terrace of the Lateran Palace, when Francis of Assisi with his tattered troop of disciples drew near, that the men were before him who should restore the faith of Christendom for awhile in the ideas which the Papacy was dishonouring, and renew thereby for awhile its lease of power and the very springs of its life. When these failed, and they failed soon, though we must not take all that Matthew Paris and other Benedictine champions write about them for gospel, there was nothing behind to rise up as a fresh support—at least, nothing “of this building.” The next great movement would begin with the Reformation, with a fresh reading of the Word of the Gospel, and a new baptism of the Spirit of the Lord.

The points which remain to be considered I can touch but lightly; though they are full of interest, the space at my command allows but a few words on each. And first, it is clear that the missionary work of the monks would have been impossible under other conditions. As monks alone could the missionaries of the West in the early Christian ages have done their work. We do full justice to the influence of the married missionaries' home. But the married missionary must have a missionary society, on which he can draw bills, behind him. Severinus, Columbanus, Boniface were in quite other case. Doubtless a holy and loving human home is the fairest thing under the sun. But it needs culture to appreciate it. In the rude, coarse, lustful life of those times the stern contrast of monastic continence, frugality, and industry alone could have arrested the

attention and compelled the homage of the pagans among whom the missionaries cast their lot. We constantly err in supposing that the virtues and graces which we are educated to appreciate, have the same hold on the uncultured which they have on us. There are broad tracts of pagandom within the very heart of this Christian country which seem to mock our lofty spiritual methods of culture. We may have to stoop to rougher and stronger means of influence to lay hold on them; and monastic missions to the pagans of our great Christian cities may not be among the impossible things of these modern days. Nor was the daring courage with which, for instance, the young monk Telemachus descended into the arena, and by the sacrifice of himself abolished the gladiatorial spectacles for ever, unconnected with his monastic culture and habits of life. The independence, too, of the Christian teacher needed in those days some such strong entrenchment. Spiritual men needed a vantage-ground which was recognized by the mass of the uncultured laity, whence they could stoop to lift them to a higher life.

But at what cost was the vantage-ground won? Was not the monastic instinct intensely selfish in its origin and working? Was not every principle of our constitution violated? Were not all the dearest and most sacred interests of society trampled in the mire by these wild fanatics? Were not all the tender affections and sympathies, all that makes life beautiful and blessed, blasted by those ruthless devotees of the idol of their own imagination, who, if they could have wrought out their will, would have made life a purgatory and the world a waste? There is this side of the question to be looked at; and the truth which lies in the charge is simply fatal to the "religious life" as a wholesome and permanent Christian institution, but by no means

conclusive against it as a thing of virtue and use in its times.

Let us consider a strong case. Simeon Stylites sternly repulsing his mother, refusing to listen to her or even to look at her, though she urged him with the most pathetic supplications, and in the last extremity, is a most unlovely spectacle. It is easy to pronounce stern judgment on a system which wrought tender hearts to an unnatural hardness like this. But instead of judging, we will try to understand it. There are some startling words about a man "hating father and mother" for Christ's sake in the Gospel ; and "Woman, what have I to do with thee ?" in substance fell more than once from the Saviour's lips. These ascetics tried to lift themselves into the sphere of a Divine experience, and to think and speak after the fashion of the Lord. I have heard the story told, with high approbation, of a Scotch divine, who, when his wife asked him if they should recognize each other in heaven, answered, that for the first thousand years he should be so occupied with the contemplation of Christ that he would have no thought for meaner things. These men, in the first fine frenzy of the new-born spiritual life, endeavoured to anticipate that experience ; and so sought to attach themselves to Christ and to heavenly things that the earthly might pass beneath their sphere. And we venture to think that some such isolation and sublimation of the domestic affections was essential to the realization, after the struggles and self-mortifications of ages, of that purity, delicacy, and spiritual beauty, which in modern life lends a holy charm to the perfection of wedded and kindred love. In other words, so ensnaring, so debasing was the influence of the flesh on the domestic, social and political life of men, that the new spiritual life had to draw itself off from them, and nourish itself on what it took to be pure celestial aliment as the condition

of its blending with them nobly at last, so as to purify and save them, instead of being, as was threatened in those days, buried in them and lost.* The new power which had entered into the world had, like the Baptist, to draw itself off to the desert, and nurse itself there, before it could enter the circle of life, and rule the whole sphere as lord. And ages are but as days in this great history. For ten centuries the spiritual element in the Church, as far as man could detach it, passed through this narrow, stern, but intense discipline—there is eternity before humanity in which to reap its fruit.

It is noteworthy, too, that, though monkery brought apparently a most potent battery to bear against everything by which secular society could increase and prosper, Society yet increased and prospered mightily. In the age, too, of supreme monastic influence, even when the greatest of monks wielded imperial power in Europe, woman rose to a position of dignity, and developed a power and beauty, which we cannot refuse to connect largely with the elevating and purifying influence of monastic life and thought, on the thought and the life of society. The monks did more to help society upwards by the spirit which they breathed, than to crush it downwards by the maxims which they promulgated. Their theory would have destroyed the civilisation which they themselves helped mightily to purify and to save.

And this connects itself with another question which has been much agitated of late. How far did Europe suffer from the withdrawal of such a vast army of capable men from her fields of activity and toil? The same question occurred in another form in an earlier age. The Emperor Maurice found that the army was suffering from the withdrawal of those who desired to devote themselves to "religion." He was for taking strong

* See a very able Paper on this subject in the *Spectator* of May 8, 1869.

steps to check it. Gregory the Great wrote to him : "The armies of my sovereign will be strengthened against their enemies, in proportion as the armies of God, whose warfare is by prayer, is increased." And Gregory was right. Industry draws strength from the spirit of man as well as from his sinews. Those who put new life and hope into humanity are preparing for the fields the noblest tillage. Population, agriculture, industry, grew mightily through the monastic ages ; and nothing was lost, but much was gained in the long run by the anti-secular action and influence of the Church. Our own Great Alfred understood the matter thoroughly. "These are the materials," he says, "of a king's work, and his tools to govern with, that he should have prayer-men, and army-men, and workmen. What ! thou knowest that without these tools no monarch can shew his skill."

It has been said of Christianity that it is deficient in stimulus to the patriotic virtues. It individualizes men, and places each one under such tremendous pressure, that the State vanishes, the individual and his individual belongings are all. But it is noteworthy that before the Advent this individualizing process had been in full play. The patriotic sentiment in Greece had been greatly weakened by the cosmopolitan Empire of Alexander. The philosophical ideas both of Zeno and Epicurus, which, like our Arminianism and Calvinism, are really stems out of one root, are remarkable for the earnestness with which they deal with individual interests, and let the grander range of the elder philosophy pass out of sight. To bear up the man against the ills of life was their main problem ; and it stated itself yet more strongly in the stoical philosophy of Rome. Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, had dawning visions of a wider patriotism, of man's citizenship, of a larger than a national world. "Humanity" came visibly to the front under the world-

empire of Rome. At this critical era the world-religion was born. Christianity, cultivating the individual, and making him the conscious citizen of a wider, even a celestial commonwealth, left him to work at his mundane duties with the new earnestness which it inspired. But the mundane at first suffered some harm and loss. The monks may be regarded as carrying to dark extremes this isolating tendency; country, kindred, was nothing to them, spiritual brotherhood was all in all. Plato, too, had dreamed this dream of the sublimation of all earthly relationships, and he, too, like the monks, believed that it was the condition of a heavenly rather than an earthly world. He says of his form of the spiritual republic: "Ἀλλ', ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παραδείγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν." But the world was immensely richer for this idea of spiritual fellowship; and as M. Ozanam points out, in the break-up of the Empire, this universal monastic brotherhood was a strong nexus of society, and helped to keep the unity of Christendom before the minds of men. No doubt it would have been a blessed thing if the monks had had an open eye for this world as well as for the world to come. But men, on the whole, see but one thing thoroughly at a time. Any great principle which has entered largely into the life of humanity, has held for generations, and even ages, almost exclusive possession of some powerful people or section of society. The march of humanity has been a march *en zigzag*. Each masterful principle which has possessed society and swayed it powerfully in one direction, has never failed to find some equally powerful principle which has seized it in time and swayed it towards the opposite; and thus, the world swaying now in one direction now in another, but ever onwards, a clear progress through the ages has been gained.

It has been urged, too, not without force, that the virtues and graces which Christianity holds in the highest esteem are of the gentler and more patient order, and that if they had all the field to themselves they would empty humanity of strength and heroism, and lower grievously the pitch of life. It might be true, if these graces could be cut off from the inspiration which Christ brought to man, and which, lifting these humbler virtues from the dust in which they had long been trodden, quickened with new energy the whole circle of the manly qualities and powers. And yet we may allow that there was no little danger that society might fall into a languid passive temper, through that idolatry of the patient virtues which was almost inevitable during the ages of persecution. It was mainly saved by the monastics.* They, specially during the earlier ages, revealed the heroic side of Christianity. Their lives were full charged with the illustration of the dignity of labour, the nobility of simplicity, the beauty of humility, the heroism of gentleness, the vigour of patience, the regal power of love. We owe it to them in large measure that the heroic virtues have lived on under the Christian discipline, and have wrought themselves into the texture of Christian society. It is well worthy of note how, as the ages passed on, monachism refined and softened its features. It lived in full communion with the life of society, hard as it strove to isolate itself. Indeed it rather anticipated than followed its development, inasmuch as during the Middle Ages the springs of all great movements were within what went by the name of the spiritual sphere. The gulf between St. Anthony and St. Anselm, for instance, is a very wide one. Anselm has already caught the spirit of the modern world. In truth the great monastics seem to rise like snow peaks in the upper

* I am not unmindful of the martyrs. But the monastic and the martyr spirit were very closely intertwined.

air, and are the first to catch the glow of the advancing sun.

And nothing can be a greater mistake than to suppose that their stern repression of the natural affections, issued in hardness and poverty of nature. Sternly as they strove to indurate themselves *quoad* world and natural affection, they lived in their monasteries lives full of human gentleness and tenderness, and in their best days not without some pure gaiety and gladness of heart. *Simplicitas, benignitas, hilaritas*, were no idle words upon their lips. Some of the most tender and passionate effusions which have come down to us from the records of the past, are contained in monastic chronicles and correspondences. Though there is something sad in those tender and apparently satisfying friendships of the cloister, they are unnaturally strained, and therefore in the long run weakening; nor can it be doubted, that from that side sore temptations pressed them, and a flood of evil at length broke in. But the reason why this hardening process did not harden, but left men with tender hearts and vivid affections, is not far to seek. The love which they denied their kindred was not wasted, they spent it with passionate fervour on the Saints and on the Lord. A grand feature of their influence on society, to which M. Comte does full justice in his critique on the Middle Age, is the career which they opened to power of every kind, and the practical illustration which they offered of the Christian doctrine of the brotherhood of mankind. "*La carrière ouverte aux talens*," was the gospel of the French Revolution, according to Mr. Carlyle. As regards the secular sphere, he is quite right. But "the career" had always been open in the monastic. One of the noblest features of our English society, and one main source of its unity, is the career which is open to men of high capacity, through the law and the legislature, to the peer-

age, and the highest offices of the state. What that element of our life does for England, the monastic orders did for Europe during the formative ages of its history. They made a spiritual bond really and visibly more powerful than any secular nexus of society, and kept alive in the world some dim faith in the truth of the fundamental principle of Christian society: "*All are one in Christ Jesus.*"

Of the service which they rendered to the literature of Europe, I feel the less need to speak at length, in that it has been so often and so ably treated, and is on the whole so fairly recognized. I only say that those who have never looked into the subject, would be simply amazed at the vast apparatus for literary work, and for the instruction of children, and that not for ecclesiastical purposes only, which was maintained by all the great Benedictine houses. They had their outlying schools and preaching stations in the most obscure villages, as the Methodists distribute their local preachers in these days. In truth, a fair picture of a day's work at such monasteries as Corby under Paschasius, Fulda under Rabanus, St. Gall under the Ekkehards, or Glastonbury under Dunstan, would reveal an earnest, loving and energetic activity in the work of the world's culture, which would have put the sluggish ways of our modern universities, even ten years ago, to open shame. Taking even the tenth century,—"which," Baronius says, "for its sterility of every excellence may be denominated iron; for its luxuriant growth of vice, leaden; and for its dearth of writers, dark,"—a diligent study of its records would reveal that the decay of learning and of zeal for scholarship, was the fruit of war and political misery; while it is as full as any age of the noble devotion of the harried and miserable monks to literature, and sorrow over its inevitable decline. The universal lamentations of the monks when their

houses were laid in ruins, was over their books, as well as their relics; and a multitude of touching stories might be recited, of the cost at which even the fragments which survived were saved. The question, too, has to be considered by those who would understand those times, how far much of this literary work, especially the wearisome transcription, would have been possible, except under the constraint which the monastic law brought to bear on men. The poor transcriber of St. Gall, who scratched on his MS.,

"Libro completo

Saltat scriptor pede læto,"

was but a specimen of a vast class. Nothing but their conception of the virtue of monastic obedience could have borne them through the wearying toil. We owe them a bitter grudge for the treasures which they destroyed; but we accept that as the inevitable counterpoise to the grand literary service which they rendered to the world. Not for themselves, but for us, they did minister; they laboured, we have entered into their labours. Very significant, too, are the beginnings of history under the monastic roof. Would it have been possible for Bede under any other conditions to have written his wonderful history, and to have carried on and recorded those quiet, keen observations of physical phenomena, which make him the real founder of the English physical school? The monks were the chroniclers of Mediæval society, we say. Why? Distinctly because they were able to grasp, as no other men grasped, the idea of God's interest in human history; because they saw that man's history in its wholeness was a Divine work. Each little chronicle of an obscure monastery must weave itself in with the history of the Creation, and the Deluge, and the Advent of the Lord. This is a tempting theme; how the beginnings of secular art, literature and science rose

from the monastic root. But we must forbear. It would be hard to measure the influence of a man like Benedict Biscop, for instance, on English civilisation. Out of his monastic vocation, for all such purposes in such an age, he might as well have been dead.

Very deeply, too, the kind of literature which they loved and fostered touched the heart and lightened the burdens of the great mass of the poor. Monkish and saintly biographies are full of grotesque images and childish miracles. But they turn mainly on the suffering of truth, purity, and charity in a world like this; on the God who watches it, and the heaven which will bring to it the recompense at last. How deeply the central Christian ideas laid hold on the great human heart, the enthusiasm of the poorest, as well as the richest, for the Crusade exhibits. The poor peasant families who left their homes and their all, and wandered forth in search of Jerusalem, were surely not far from the kingdom of God. There is a large element of bane in this literature, and in its influence on the multitude, but in such times as those the blessing over-abounds.

Two subjects remain for notice,—each of them worthy of a treatise, while on each I can allow myself but a word. They are, the sphere which monachism opened to woman, and the principle and fruits of monastic ministry to the poor. On the first point we may say with truth, that when we have found for woman in the secular sphere, a position and a work which may mate with that which the Middle Ages offered to her in the monastic, we shall have solved successfully one of the most pressing and perplexing problems of modern society. Their work for the poor is open to greater question. In the later monastic ages it was vicious and demoralizing in the extreme. But nothing can be more unjust than to argue from this, that the influence of the large and lavish

monastic charity was on the whole baneful, in the ages when misery was abundant through war and tyranny, when pilgrims were many, and when the great monastic houses were the only hostelries and almonries of the poor. They made as much poverty as they cured, is the charge of the economists. Quite possibly. But have we found the *juste milieu*? The monastery erred grievously on the side of indiscriminate lavishness. The modern system, which has now touched its nadir at St. Pancras,—where niggard charity leaves dying paupers to fight with rats, and stifles them with the stench of sewers,—does not look beautiful beside the tender courage of St. Francis in a hospital of lepers, or even the gentler ministries of the sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. It is easy, however, to indulge in sharp and bitter remarks on what is confessedly a profoundly difficult and intricate subject. It may be enough to indicate here that the tendency of the best thinking as well as feeling on the subject in England is at present not in the direction of St. Pancras, but in the direction of that personal, intimate and considerate ministry of Christian intelligence and charity to poverty, which the monks made illustrious throughout the earlier Middle Age.

In closing this Essay I am, of course, not unmindful of the fearful picture of corruption, of the tales of unutterable abominations and horrors, which I might draw from authentic monastic history. A life of such high tension, kept at full pitch so long, inevitably, when the tension relaxed, sank into dark, sad depths. Great spiritual movements are powerful for a time only; their lees are always noxious, though there is little in history so foul as the lees of the monastic. Very noble, beautiful, heroic; much of it was while the red blood of its youth was in it; very pallid, foul, and base it became when it dragged on a dull mechanical existence after its work in the world

was done. But to judge it, I think that we must look at it in its prime ; in the light of its aims, aspirations, and hopes. It is the true judgment ; it is the key, perhaps, to the merciful judgments of God. It would be easy to show what dragged monachism to the dust ; it is more profitable to consider what enabled it, in spite of this constant human proneness to corruption, to regenerate itself so often, and to endure so long.

On the whole, we must say, to sum up the matter, that nothing in the long run and on a large scale succeeds in God's world but God's law. Extremes on either hand are ultimately fatal. "In the beginning God made them male and female," body and soul, man and the world. All rebellion against His institution is in the end futile and ruinous. The man who stands open all round him to the influences, and bound with the bonds of both worlds,—that is, the man who stands in Christ at the point where they are one,—is the religious man, and his life alone is the "religious life." To bring forth this man is the great problem of Christian history ; and I often think that humanity has to be shaped for it much as a sculptor moulds his clay. Much has to be taken into the first rude shape, which will be pared off and toned down into the harmony of the form as the development proceeds. Masses have to be added here and there to make an organ or a muscle, which are destined to vanish and yet to leave an invaluable line as a legacy. Were the monastic orders attached thus to the great body of Christian society not to be permanently wrought into it in their integrity, but to leave, as Time pares them away, some clear line, some essential feature, in the living body which shall survive the process, and shall stand up as the complete humanity in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God ?

THE RELATION
OF THE
CHURCH TO THE STATE.

BY THE
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STEADILY though slowly through long years, marked but by few observers, yet of late with a rapidity that has attracted all eyes, the great question of the relation of the Church to the State has been coming to the fore, until even the careless and reluctant have to confess that it has become the question of the day. It is likely to continue such for many a day to come. It refuses to be remanded to the domain of intellectual controversy, among the shadowy crowd of abstract speculations. It comes into court as a practical, real, living problem, putting in a claim which can no longer be evaded, to be earnestly dealt with, and wisely, justly, finally settled. Men see—some with hope, as the mariner who sights from the mast-head the white cliffs within whose sheltering embrace lie his haven and his home; others with terror, as one whose vessel feels the outer curve of the whirlpool—that changes are at hand in England, whether wise or foolish, for good or for evil, the sum total of which will amount to an ecclesiastical revolution, greater, it may be, than the Reformation itself. But no man can foresee

in what shape or condition any of the religious communities now existing in England will emerge, when that deluge of change shall have reached its height and again subsided. It behoves every thoughtful Christian Englishman therefore to labour with whatever ability God gives him, towards the formation of those just views from which alone right action can spring. "Truth is great," but she can prevail only upon condition that men see her face and hear her voice.

Three main aspects of this inquiry demand to be carefully discriminated and distinctly considered. The relation of the Christian Church, and consequently of Christian Churches, to the Civil Government; the relation of Christianity to national life; and the relation of the kingdom of Christ to the kingdoms of this world. These three sub-questions I propose to discuss in the order in which they are here stated.

WHAT RELATIONS IS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—OR ARE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES SEVERALLY AND COLLECTIVELY—CAPABLE OF SUSTAINING TO THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT; AND WHICH OF THESE IS THE TRUE RELATION?

This word "Church" is perhaps the most remarkable word in the New Testament. Etymologically, indeed, "Church" (*kirk, kirche*), is supposed to mean simply "the Lord's house," and to have been transferred from the building, to the assembly convened in it. But the meaning of words depends not on etymology but on usage. Usage has made "Church" the authorised representative in our language of the Greek word "*Ecclesia*" (*église*); and in discussing its meaning, it is of the meaning of this Greek word that we are really speaking. What renders this word so extremely remarkable, as used in the New Testament, is its double parentage. By birth it is heathen: by adoption it is Jewish. The same thing (it may be said) is true of other Jewish-Greek words

—“synagogue” for example. But no instance, I think, can be found in which heathen and Jewish usage have so remarkably combined, along wholly different lines of thought, to train and educate a word for Christian use. To the ear of the Greek, *Ecclesia* was a classic and noble word, calling up the image of those popular assemblies of citizens (as distinguished from aliens, sojourners, and slaves) which in the old days of republican liberty wielded sovereign power, and were to the body politic what the heart is to the human frame. Noble though this meaning was, had the word borne merely this heathen political sense, and carried to Jewish ears no sacred associations, it is incredible that it could have been employed as we find it, without comment or explanation, in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, or have been accepted at once and for ever, not simply as one name among others, but as the appropriate and distinctive name of the brotherhood of Christian believers. The familiar term *Synagogue*, hallowed by long religious use, would seem to have preferred a far more natural claim to this honour. But *Ecclesia* was already a consecrated word. It had been employed to express one of the highest conceptions which the Jewish mind could entertain; not merely that of the religious assembly of the families of a certain neighbourhood, with their civil and spiritual rulers—the local synagogue; but that of the representative assembly of the holy nation—the Congregation of Israel.

The Septuagint version of the Hebrew Scriptures, regarded by Greek-speaking Jews in our Saviour's day with reverence hardly inferior to that paid to the original text, employs the term *Ecclesia* in this sense; not indeed as the exclusive or even most frequent rendering, but with such frequency, and in passages of such importance, as to make it a familiar and sacred word.* Stephen, in his

* Three Hebrew words occur in the Pentateuch, indifferently rendered in our Authorised

defence before the Sanhedrim, was using no strange newly-coined expression, as an English reader may naturally imagine, when he spoke of Moses as the leader of "the CHURCH in the wilderness;" or, if Stephen spoke in Aramaic, the writer of the Acts was not borrowing a Christian phrase in translating his speech, but was employing a word familiar to all readers of the Greek Scriptures. The term "synagogue" would naturally be applied by Jewish believers, as St. James actually applies it (James ii. 2) to their local congregations. But in assuming, doubtless under Divine inspiration, from its earliest beginning this name *Ecclesia* without qualification or limitation (Acts ii. 47), THE CHURCH not only claimed the promise of Him who had said, "On this rock I will build my Church," but also seemed to assert its claim to be indeed the true "Congregation of Israel;" Abraham's spiritual progeny; not a novel community, nor an upstart temporary conventicle, but that very communion of saints and body of the faithful which had received God's promises from the elder times in the same unbroken succession in which they should hand them down to the latest age.

If such and so weighty were the reasons for adopting this name as the distinctive title of the Christian community, while it was still composed only of Jews, and

Version, "congregation" and "assembly:" viz., *קָהָל*, *עֵדָה*, *מוֹעֵד*, the first from a root signifying to call; the second and third from a root signifying to appoint, keep an appointment (in time or place), meet together. It is only the first of these words which the Seventy render by *Ecclesia*, though for this also in many passages they give *συναγωγή*. The following is a selection of the most important passages in which *Ecclesia* occurs: - Deut. ix. 10; xviii. 16; xxiii. 1-3; xxxi. 30. Jud. xxi. 5. Neh. xiii. 1. Ps. xxii. 22; lxxxix. 5. If the reader will make the experiment of reading the word "Church" in these passages, he will perceive the new light which is thus shed on its use in the New Testament. In Ps. xxvi. 12; lxviii. 26, the cognate word *מִזְבֵּחַ*, in the plural, is rendered by the plural of *Ecclesia*. In Lev. viii. 3, Deut. xxxi. 28, the derived verb from *Ecclesia* is used for the summoning of the assembly. At first sight, the three Hebrew words seem to be used indiscriminately. See, e.g., Num. x. 1-7. But the question arises, even on this passage, whether the assembly of verse 7 is the same with that of verse 8, or, rather, with the select assembly of chiefs appointed in verse 4. Space for an exhaustive examination of all the passages is not at my command; but I believe such an examination would confirm the view that while the other terms signify the whole multitude of Israel as assembled by Divine appointment in their encampment, or gathered for worship before the Tabernacle, that term which the Seventy saw fit to represent by *Ecclesia*, signifies an assembly specially and legally convened, more especially such a select representative assembly as that described in Deut. xxxi. 28-30.

confined to Jerusalem ; the Gentile meaning of the word, breathing of freedom, order, law and privilege, had a noble and beautiful fitness to designate those innumerable brotherhoods of disciples which sprang up everywhere, as Christianity, bursting the ripe shell of Judaism, flung its living seed far and wide through the Gentile world. The "mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known," which at first was concealed even from the Apostles themselves, was revealed (as God is wont to reveal His secrets) not by verbal teaching, but by the interpretation of fact,—“that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.” In these Churches, in some of which Jewish and Gentile believers were united in equal numbers as well as on equal terms ; others of which were composed mainly—and some, perhaps, exclusively—of Gentile converts, men learned that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek ; that the middle wall of partition is broken down in Christ ; and that he who is Christ’s is “Abraham’s seed,” and an heir of that promise in which “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham.” The very name indicated that a Christian *Ecclesia* was not a chance mob, or mere voluntary club ; but a society ruled by laws, to which each believer yielded a perfectly free and willing obedience, but which no earthly power had enacted or could repeal. Its members were invested with privileges and dignities compared with which even Roman citizenship was despicable ; they were citizens of the heavenly city, members of the commonwealth of Israel, fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God ; a royal priesthood, a holy nation.

Out of this secondary application grew, in the lapse of a few years, a new and nobler meaning, expressing

an idea the germ of which indeed as of all other Christian truth, lay in the Hebrew Scriptures, but which in its clearness and completeness was one of the newest as well as grandest ideas ever presented to the human mind. For a brief space the Christian Church had been visibly and locally one. The church at Jerusalem was the Catholic Church. No sooner was a second church formed, outside Jerusalem; or no sooner had one believer "fallen asleep in Jesus," and gone up to join the ancient fellowship of saints and prophets, than this visible local unity was broken, never to be restored until the coming of the Lord. In the first chapters of the Acts "the Church" is the Christian society in Jerusalem. We have not read far before we are told of other local churches (chap. xiii. 1; xiv. 23). A few more years, and the churches of the Gentiles were to be found in all the great cities, and not a few lesser ones, of Asia Minor, Southern Europe, Northern Africa, and we know not how far away to the East beyond the limits of the Roman world. The visible unity being thus dislocated by the twofold agency of distance and of death, and to some extent also by the divergent influence of national customs, feeling, and speech, the sublime idea developed itself—an idea, if I might use such a phrase, of the heart rather than of the intellect—of THE CHURCH as a spiritual unity, bounded by no limits of space or time, language or usage, life or death—of one body, into which all who believe in Christ are baptized by one Spirit; one family in earth and heaven, comprehending all those (and none else) of whom it is written, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This is the idea of the Church which we find in St. Paul's Epistles, and which is symbolized in the closing visions of St. John by the Holy City, New Jerusalem, and by the Bride, the Lamb's wife. It is one of those stupendous Bible ideas, alike

simple and sublime, which are manifestly of super-human origin ; for the human mind has not yet grown up to them, and spiritual enlightenment is needed even to apprehend them.

Life always produces organization. The new-born Christian societies, full of fresh intense life, were on that very account organized communities. Regarding them from their human side, we perceive four elements at work, tending to modify their constitution—the Jewish and the Gentile ; the popular and the authoritative. The genius for practical order and organization, which powerfully marked the Jewish mind, wonderfully combined respect for individual liberty and personal dignity with deep reverence for authority. The earliest Churches, composed of Jews, naturally adopted the simple but efficient type of church government ready to their hand in the synagogue. When this primitive model came to be applied to Gentile churches, two opposite tendencies must very soon have begun to struggle for mastery. The Greek could understand monarchy (or, as he called it, tyranny), and he could understand democracy ; but this fine balance of authority and liberty which the Jew both understood and loved, because it rested on a deep religious foundation, was to the Greek, for lack of such foundation, incomprehensible and impossible. If the practical and devout Roman mind had seemed to approach this balance, it was due to the fact that in the earlier and better ages, Roman life and polity were also based on a religious foundation. But it was an unstable equilibrium. Roman history exhibits the record of a prolonged struggle, in which empire at length triumphed and liberty expired. Humanly speaking, the like struggle was inevitable in the Christian churches, viewed as communities of men requiring and recognizing some kind of government. In the highest sense, each

church acknowledged the Risen Lord Himself as its Chief Pastor and Only Lawgiver. But, in its internal management, was it to be a monarchy or a democracy? For although it might be an aristocracy at the outset, it could scarcely remain so. The conflict was long; but in the end, the result was as decisive in the Church as in the Empire. Partly (we can hardly doubt) from the strong reaction caused by such anarchical tendencies as early came into play at Corinth—and not there only; partly from the exigencies of times of persecution, which made a wise, brave, strong bishop such a tower of strength and comfort to his church, that men neither grudged nor envied a power so full of care and peril; partly from other causes, amongst which the human infirmity of the love of rule cannot be ignored; the power of the clergy, and above all, of the bishops, grew continually, until at length the popular element was not merely subjugated but absorbed. “The Church” no longer signified the body of Christian believers, but the bishops and clergy. Monarchy was victorious, and liberty perished.

Thus, the word “Church” slowly acquired a meaning wholly new, and utterly different from any which it was capable of suggesting in Apostolic times. The idea was developed,—so familiar to us in ecclesiastical history,—of the Catholic Church, as a divinely-ordered and inspired body, authorized to declare and interpret Divine truth; universal and indivisible by virtue not of spiritual unity in faith, love, and holiness, but of uniformity of creed, rite, and visible polity; in which, therefore, the form is as essential as the spirit, and severed from which, no Christian or body of Christians can be accounted in communion with the Church of Christ. A majestic idea! One of the most imposing that ever ruled the imaginations of men; yet impossible and

historically untrue. Impossible, because involving a theory of perpetual inspiration at variance with all the facts of church history, and practically set aside as often as one bishop excommunicated another, or one General Council reversed the decrees of another, or decided any controversy by the vote of a majority, against an adverse and angry minority. Untrue historically, because as the theory approached its full development in the growing supremacy of the Roman See, the great schism between the East and the West gave the death-blow to visible catholicity. It is the romance of religion. In our own time and country, we see it reduced to practical absurdity, by the inconsistent claims of Anglo-Catholics and Roman Catholics, who reason from identical premises to contradictory conclusions. To sober reason, any theory of the Christian Church which excommunicates from Christ's holy Catholic Church John Bunyan and John Wesley, John Milton and Isaac Watts; and unchurches the great Protestant communities of America, Scotland, France, Switzerland, and Germany, as well as the English and Welch Nonconformists, stands self-condemned. Nevertheless, we need not wonder that this imposing idea inspires the imagination and subdues the understanding of very many fervent and sincere Christians; that it seems to them as bright with the dawn of promise as it is hoary with the moss of antiquity; and that amid the visible disunity of Protestant churches, and the bewilderments and disappointments of our distracted age, they yearn for the restoration of visible Catholic unity as the only means of fulfilling our Lord's prayer---"*that they all may be one.*" There is in truth but one grander idea; one infinitely higher, but on that very account far more difficult to grasp---that of "THE CHURCH which is His Body."

In any argument touching the relation of the

Church to the State, or to civil government, it is of vital importance that we settle what we mean by "The Church." What Church? In which of the three meanings whose history we have been tracing in outline do we employ the term? Do we mean some distinct body of Christians, separated from others, whether as in the first age by locality, or as in later times by rite, government, or doctrinal formula? Do we mean all true Christians, regarded as spiritually one—spite of outward diversities—through personal union with Christ, and participation of His Spirit? Do we mean some body of Christians, in a given country, or in many countries, firmly compacted like the Roman Catholic Church, or loosely held together by outward ties, like the Episcopal Church of England, or the various Protestant Episcopal churches regarded (in some sense not easy to define) as "branches" of one Catholic Church? We ought, above all, to take care that we do not allow these three different meanings secretly to interchange, or confusedly to intermingle; using the word "Church" now in this sense, now in that, and again with no definite meaning at all. Fatal as such confusion must be to all clear and true thought, it is to be feared that chains of argument have often been constructed and applauded which depended on it as their main strength.

Dismissing, for the present, the post-apostolic idea of the visible Catholic Church, and going back to the two aspects of the Christian Church presented in the New Testament, we find their point of union in this fact, that the primitive and formative idea of a local Christian church was, that it consisted of and contained the true Christians, or members of the Body of Christ, dwelling in that locality. There might be—perhaps in every case were—false brethren unawares brought in; inconsistent members, denying in deeds the faith which

they professed and intellectually held ; and secret believers who, from timidity and other causes, had not openly joined the Church. No idea is practically worked out in this world without failure and imperfection. But these drawbacks did not alter the fact that the design and model-idea of "the church of God" in any one place—Corinth, for example—was, that it should be composed of those who, in that place, were "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints : " of all such, and of none else. THE CHURCH, on the other hand, in the sense in which it is spoken of, for example, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, so far as it existed on earth (exclusive of the great and ever-growing "General Assembly" above) could come into contact and relation with civil government only as represented by local churches, or in the persons of their members. As long, therefore, as we are on the Scripture ground, no confusion can arise from our speaking of the relation of the Church to the State, and to the laws and rulers of the State.

Thus explained, the possible relations of the Church and the State to one another appear to be four : Hostility ; Alliance ; Identity ; Friendly independence.

The simplest moral relation in which any two men, or bodies of men, can stand to each other, seems to be that of direct hostility : that one should say "No" to the other's "Yes," and that whichever happens to be the stronger should knock the other down and conquer him. Historically, this disregarding temporary abatements or intermissions was the actual relation of the Church to the State for three hundred years. The battle was fairly fought on the broad field of the Roman empire. Persecution sometimes raged indiscriminately against Christians of whatever rank, age, or sex. At other times it sought to disorganize the Christian societies by destroying their bishops and presbyters. Then again, with more

subtle malignity, it struck at the very root of Christianity, in the fierce endeavour to extirpate the Christian Scriptures. The Divine Head of the Church, rejected by the blind multitude, condemned by priest and procurator, bound, scourged, crucified, yet rising unharmed from the grave on the third day, while the keepers did shake and became as dead men, is the type of His Church's history through those three ages of deadly conflict and of strength made perfect in weakness. The result was decisive. Christianity, matched against the strongest government the world has seen, proved stronger than it. It is a settled question, that if a State in which Christianity exists, is to be peaceful and prosperous, its relation to the Church must be other than that of direct hostility.

The State must then make peace with the Church. But on what terms? The idea of friendly independence would have been as unattractive in the eyes of a Christian bishop of the fourth century as it was impossible to the mind of a Roman statesman. The imperial government had to deal with an *imperium in imperio*, the attempt to crush which by force had proved a hopeless failure. Divided empire was intolerable. Nothing remained, looking at the problem from a Roman point of view, but that the Church's right to govern her own members by her own laws should be conceded; but linked on in due subordination to the civil authority. Substituting protection and patronage for persecution, the State claimed the corresponding right of paternal control. So the great experiment was entered on, which has continued for nearly fifteen centuries and a half, through manifold phases, but not with satisfactory results. With results so very far from satisfactory, that at the present moment the cry "*a free Church in a free State*," is beginning to be heard even among the Latin nations, as

a watchword of progress. The Establishment principle is disowned, both in theory and practice, in the United States of America and in the British Colonies. In Ireland, by the deliberate verdict of the British people, it has been abandoned, on grounds at once of justice and of policy. In Scotland it has but a feeble root. Even in England, where in one form or other the alliance of Church and State is older than Parliament, older than the Courts of Justice, older than trial by jury, older than the monarchy itself; and in its modern form, as framed by the Tudors and Stuarts, has so twined its roots round our laws and institutions that it has been said that not one but a hundred Acts of Parliament will be required for its abolition, it is beginning to be counted among things which wax old, and are ready to vanish away. The most keen-eyed watchman of the future will not insure its life for another generation.

This state of things affords no positive proof, though it does afford a powerful presumption, that the principle is false. All change is not progress. Institutions may fail, not through inherent defect, but through the folly or dishonesty of those who make them; as a leaky ship with a brave captain and crew may come safe into harbour, while the best ship ever launched, lubberly and cowardly handled, founders in the storm. Nations may decay, and dream that they are growing. If we do not inquire wisely, when we assume that the former times were better than these, we have inquired to little purpose if we take for granted that in all respects they were worse. But the principle of State patronage and control of Christianity contains within itself this inevitable and fatal flaw: it necessarily involves either persecution or immorality. Either the State, assuming to be the supreme judge of religious truth, must make a selection of the church or churches

to be established, and must in so doing discountenance and injure other churches, in proportion to the favour shown to the members of the selected communion; which is unjust : or else, assuming that all doctrines and rites are of equal value, it must patronise all alike, which is immoral. For if this means that the State confesses its incapacity to judge between truth and error, then it is a grave immorality to assume an office for which it is confessedly unfit, and to perpetuate an evil whose existence is certain and its amount unknown, for the sake of a good whose amount and existence are alike questionable. But if it means that the State, being able to judge, affirms that one creed and form of worship is as good or as worthless as another, then this is not simply immoral : it strikes at the very root of morality. If there be no vital difference and eternal enmity between truth and falsehood, even on the highest questions, then neither can there be any between right and wrong.

Church history furnishes but too abundant illustration of the former half of this dilemma ; to wit, that the establishment by the State of Christianity *as true*, and of one form of the Christian Church *as the true Church*, involves persecution. The worst persecutions of the worst pagan persecutors have not been comparable in blood-thirsty ferocity with those which have been waged by professedly Christian governments, in the name of Christ, against Christians whose only crime was that they sought to follow Christ according to what they believed to be a purer model than the Church with which the State was in alliance. In milder forms, but with equal clearness, the injustice inseparable from the maintenance of a dominant Church is illustrated by the history of England during the last three centuries. The intellectual and social, as well as moral and religious injury and injustice wrought in this nation by the one

fact of the exclusion of Nonconformists from the national Universities, have been immeasurable, and cannot be contemplated without a burning sense of wrong and shame. In proportion as legal and social disabilities are removed from the adherents of other churches, the position of the one established church becomes logically untenable; and sooner or later the logic of ascertained truth becomes the irresistible logic of fact. Practical contradictions can last a long time in England; but here, also, they are doomed.

With regard to the second horn of the dilemma, the advocate of establishments may concede that it would be immoral for the State to establish other religions—as Mohammedanism, Hinduism, and Buddhism—side by side with Christianity, because this would be a public profession of scepticism, under the disguise of homage done to religion; and under the pretence of aiding Christianity would in fact declare open war against the very object with which it was set up amongst mankind—to “*BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH.*” But he may urge with seeming justice that whereas the Church of Christ, notwithstanding the unhappy divisions among its members, is still one, and Christianity is a greater thing than our creeds and controversies, there is nothing immoral in the State recognizing this higher unity, accepting Christianity as true without regard to the controversies and sects existing among Christians, and establishing all Christian churches indifferently, on the basis of what is common to all. There are those who would eagerly welcome this policy, troubling themselves very little about its morality. But its morality is what we are here concerned with. My reply then is, first, that since persons holding any creed or no creed might call themselves Christians in order to claim the aid of the State, it would in this case be necessary for the State authoritatively to define what is or is

not Christianity, selecting from the creeds and customs of all churches vital points of agreement, and drawing the boundary line between essential and non-essential differences. The State must, in fact, assume the highest prerogative ever claimed by the Church—that of authority in matters of faith. If it be granted (as it must) that this is wholly impossible, and that the State must simply accept the creeds and rites of the bodies styling themselves churches, passing no judgment on their truth, simply because they are believed and practised ; then the whole basis of the acceptance of Christianity as true, in opposition to other human creeds, is abandoned ; all other religions may put in an equal claim,* and the immorality returns on us in all its monstrosity. But, further, that which all true Christians and churches have in common, and which the New Testament lays down as essential and distinctive, is in its nature incapable of being recognized by the State. Love to Christ ; love to the brethren ; holiness, without which no man can see the Lord ; the possession of the Spirit of Christ, without which a man is none of His ; righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ; are not things touching which either the House of Lords or the Privy Council can pass judgment, or which can be supported out of glebe lands, or charges on the consolidated fund. What the State pays for, if it pay at all, must be precisely those things in which churches and Christian men differ, viz :—public teaching and worship ; and in regard to which, though a man may profess and support this form or that, this belief or that, and yet be a true Christian, he cannot, without compromising his honesty, support and profess all alike.

There is yet another form of alliance between the Church and the State in which the Church is the sove-

* As the Chinamen have actually done in Australia.

reign authority, and the civil government rules in its name and as its vassal. This needs no discussion here. It is practicable only on the Papal theory of the Catholic Church. Applied to a national Church,—still more to a Church comprising only a portion of the nation,—it is not merely visionary but manifestly absurd.

The noblest form in which the establishment principle can be maintained, is unquestionably that set forth by Hooker, in the last book of his "*Ecclesiastical Polity*," and familiarly and inseparably associated in the mind of the present generation of Englishmen with the name of its noble-minded and thorough-going advocate, Dr. Arnold. The true relation of Church and State, on this view, is neither alliance nor separation, but identity. The body politic and the body ecclesiastical are regarded as distinguishable in idea and nature, but composed in fact of the same persons; so that (in Hooker's words), "there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any member of the Commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England." This grand and simple theory, receiving strong apparent support from the analogy of the Jewish nation, requires to be dealt with on a broader ground than that of the relation of the Church to the civil government: it obliges us to investigate the true relation of Christianity to national life. But meantime, looking practically at its application to our own nation and time, the fatal flaw is at once evident,—unreality. Dr. Arnold maintains that the present order of things in England was settled on this assumption. Whatever the assumption was, clearly the fact was not so. When the present constitution of Church and State was framed, under Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth, a large portion of the nation, including most of the heads of the Church of England, were strongly

opposed to the new order of things, and continued in heart and conscience attached to the Church of Rome.* Those on the other hand, who considered the Reformation incomplete, and the re-modelled Church of England but half-Protestant, were driven off in the contrary direction. By the time the new Church of England was a century old, Presbyterians and Independents had grown up to be the strongest party in the State; and for a few years it seemed as though the Church and the Commonwealth of England were riven asunder for ever. The rent was too violent to last; but it was also too wide and deep to be healed except by the wisest, most cautious, and most generous measures. The Act of Uniformity, destroying the last hope of such a course, rendered it impossible that the schism ever should be healed; and condemned the Church on whose behalf it was framed, to be henceforth the Church of a part only, and that, a constantly diminishing proportion, of the nation. During the two following centuries, through successive phases of persecution, toleration, emancipation, and growing claims to equality; patiently fighting their way up to the level standing-ground, out of those valleys of humiliation and of the shadow of death which the dominant Church deemed their proper abodes, never losing a foot of ground so gained; several distinct powerful Protestant communities have grown up outside the Church of England. The Roman Church has risen from the very dust of oppression to a position in which, in open contempt of law, its prelates assume territorial titles; and it now numbers among its hundreds of recent converts some of the ablest of the clergy and wealthiest of the nobility. Even if we could stretch our liberality so as broadly to include all these churches and sects under the one name of Christian,

* See Professor Bonamy Price's remarkable paper in the *Contemporary Review* for February, 1869; p. 167.

and could say, "These all together compose the Church of the nation,"—alas! how large a portion of the nation would still refuse to be included: worshipping in none of our sanctuaries, holding none of our creeds, feeling neither love nor reverence for the Christian name!

A recent exposition and defence of the theory which identifies the Church with the State, from the pen of one of its ablest living advocates—the Dean of Westminster—is so outspoken and thorough in its following out of the principle, so confident in tone, and—whatever may be thought of its depth—so clear and broad in statement, that it seems impossible to leave it unnoticed; although any full criticism would be quite beyond the aim and limit of this Essay.* The Dean deals with the matter not theoretically, but practically. Principles are taken for granted, or serenely ignored, and attention is turned to results and advantages, objections and practical answers. The general effect is dazzling, but on careful inspection it appears that the surface only of this great argument has been handled, its vital core being hardly touched. The union of Church and State is made to appear easy, advantageous, and splendid, but at the cost of everything real and spiritual in the Church. The existence, and even the possibility of the Church as a supernatural institution, of local churches as spiritual societies, divinely constituted and guided, is frankly denied. "Every society by the mere fact of its being a human society, must be temporal, must be guided by mixed motives, must have a temporal government" (p. 11). The distinction (marked enough, certainly, in the New Testament) between the godly and ungodly, the Christian and unchristian portions of the nation, is treated as non-existent, or unimportant. The claim for

* An address on the Connection of Church and State, delivered at Sion College on February 15, 1868. By Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, D.D., Dean of Westminster. Macmillan and Co., 1868.

the freedom of the Church from State control, and the separation of what is spiritual from what is secular, is thus made to appear as a claim on the behalf of the clergy to the exclusive management of ecclesiastical affairs. The Church, in fact, disappears from view, nothing being left but the State and the clergy; and the national government (including the legislature and the courts of law) becomes by an astonishing metamorphosis the representative of that "multitude of them that believed," of whom we read in the New Testament that they were "of one heart, and of one soul." If this be not a *reductio ad absurdum* of the theory of which it is the legitimate development, it is a *reductio ad nudum*. The theory, through the merciless consistency and candour of its gifted advocate, stands before us in its bare stark destitution of all spiritual reality, power, and grandeur. What is here called the connection of the Church with the State is, in fact, the absorption of the Church by the State. It is a union like the union of the clear, living stream with the turbid lake, in which the stream loses its life and purity, but imparts neither to the lake. The Church loses its spirituality, but the State remains as worldly as before.

One possible relation remains—that of friendly independence. Abstaining from all hostile control, the State may equally abstain from all patronage, favour, or support, all intermeddling with the creed, worship, or order of the Christian Church in any of its societies, great or small. I have said friendly independence; not unfriendly—a mere suspension of relations: not the pretended ignorance and real enmity of two old friends who, having quarrelled, pass in the street without recognition: not the sullen irritation of a broken partnership, dissolved through the incapacity of one partner and the obstinacy of the other: not the loathing estrangement of divorce,

over their children's graves, between those who had promised to be faithful to each other until death : none of these but the full, frank, *religious* recognition on both hands that it is best for both Church and State—best for Christianity, and for the nation—that religion be free. Free, not because a nation can do as well without religion as with it ; nor yet because one religion is as good as another ; but because the One Religion which can save either a man or a nation, can develop its true genius and full might only in freedom.

Nonconformist champions have sometimes presented their main thesis in the form of the crude and barren negation, *that civil government and religion have nothing to do with each other*. It is not wonderful that such a doctrine should arouse indignant opposition. The object of Christianity is to make men good and happy. That of civil government is to restrain their wickedness and misery within the narrowest practicable bounds. The work of the Church is to diffuse charity ; that of the civil government to maintain justice. Is it rationally conceivable, that whereas charity and justice are but two sides of one Divine law, the State and religion can have no interest in each other's work, no mutual obligations and relations ? Since the obligations of Christianity (the sole authoritative form of religion) bind every man, even in the humblest duties of daily life, is it not an absurdity to suppose that any number of men associated in that highest form of merely human partnership which we call civil government, for the performance of the weightiest duties, are released from those obligations ?

The true ground on which the religious—not irreligious—separation of Church and State is to be advocated, and must at last be accepted, alike by Christian statesmen and Christian churches, is, that since a government can no more be justified than an individual in assuming

duties which God has not imposed and for which He has bestowed no capacity; since the alliance of Church and State, under various forms of both, has produced results disastrous to liberty, religion, justice, and peace, during more than fifteen hundred years, adding the commentary of experience to the silence of the New Testament; and since the Lord of the Church and Governor of the nations has assigned not to states or governments but to His Church the work of spreading His truth and kingdom amongst mankind, which work demands freedom as one of its most needful conditions: therefore it is the religious duty of the State to leave the Church perfectly free.

The relation of the Church (or the Churches) to civil government, though the most familiar and most immediately practical, is after all not the deepest, most vital form of this great problem. Its true solution must depend on the answer to a deeper and larger question—WHAT IS THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO NATIONAL LIFE?

To not a few Christians, I am well aware, such an inquiry will appear mis-directed, and even unmeaning. Among the many currents and counter-currents of modern Christianity, is one remarkable and powerful side eddy—sufficiently powerful to have drawn in many intelligent minds and devout hearts—which, were it strong enough, would not simply separate all Church institutions from civil government, but would draw aside the whole body of really spiritual Christians from all share in public life, national, international, municipal, and social; and would leave legislation, administration, and public reformation in the hands of those who are either insincerely and but nominally Christians, or avowedly worldly and ungodly. According to this school of doctrine the message of the Gospel to the individual is regarded as its whole scope; and its only business is the gathering, one

by one, of believers into the Church, sundering, at the same time, all the ties of love and duty that bound them to those earthly communities which are regarded as irredeemably profane and hopelessly doomed. With the greatest personal respect for many who hold these views, I frankly avow that they appear to me as much out of harmony with the teaching of Scripture as at variance with the lessons of God's providence. Excellent as are the motives with which these views are advocated, if they were to be generally accepted as sound—if worldly men as well as Christians were to be unanimously persuaded that such is indeed the teaching of the Gospel—a heavier blow would be struck against Christianity, and in favour of the cause of unbelief, than is ever to be dreaded from the assaults of a rationalistic dogmatism which mistakes itself for science, or a "higher criticism," so uncritical as to believe itself infallible.

In this matter, as always, God's word is at one with His works, if both be read fairly and humbly. The Bible takes great account of nations. The fundamental commission of the Christian Church—the only recorded word of our Lord and Master to the whole body of His disciples, so far as as they could be assembled in one congregation—is this: "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of ALL NATIONS.*" The distinctive title of the most honoured and successful preacher of the Gospel whom the Lord ever sent forth was "the Apostle of the nations." Principally through his unrivalled labours, his preaching, and his writings, God gave the nations of Europe that Christianity, which, perverted and enfeebled as it has been, nevertheless constitutes the mainspring of all modern history. It is he who—conscious that his work was a far greater one than that of merely ministering to individual penitence and faith, and gathering a small

Church out of the wreck of humanity—tells us that “God, that made the world and all things therein . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek the Lord.” It is he who seems never weary of repeating those glorious promises of the ancient Scriptures which call on the nations to rejoice with God’s people, and tell of the root of Jesse who should “*rise to reign over the nations: in Him shall the nations trust.*” It is the same great teacher of Divine truth who shows us in the promise to Abraham the primal Gospel for mankind:—“The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all the nations be blessed.”*

The Old Testament Scriptures are here, as elsewhere, in accord with the New. The Psalms and Prophets contain the freest invitations to all nations, the most glowing predictions of the blessings in store for them. Even in their heathen condition they are seen filling most important places in the scheme of God’s providence, and dealt with as nations, both in judgment and in mercy; while the future is as bright for them as for the Chosen People. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and He is the Governor among the nations. The nations are the inheritance of the Messiah, who is a light to lighten the nations as well as the glory of His people Israel. All

* The employment in many places of our Authorised Version of the terms “Gentiles” and “heathen” for the Hebrew גוֹיִם and Greek *ἔθνη*, although perhaps we may gain by it more than we lose, disguises the breadth of Scripture teaching and promise, and puts the English reader under a serious disadvantage. He scarcely suspects that these words mean simply “nations,” still less that in the singular they are applied to Israel (Gen. xii. 2), and imagines a distinction without foundation. How entirely different, *e.g.*, would be the impression if in Gen. xxxv. 11, instead of “*a company of nations*,” we translated “*a congregation (or church) of Gentiles!*” The term “heathen” is perhaps still more questionable, because, like the analogous word “pagan” (rejecting as manifestly false the etymology which would connect it with *ἔθνος*), it conveys the idea of an idol-worshipping people, a meaning which lodged itself in these words in that transition period when the cities of the empire were Christian, but the “peasants” or “heath-people” still clung to the old gods.

nations shall serve Him. All nations shall call Him blessed. The entire scope and spirit of the Old Testament references to the nations generally is in such powerful contrast with the bitter contemptuous spirit cherished as part of their religion by the Jews towards all other nations, that it forms one of the many unobtrusive but unanswerable internal proofs which taken together furnish a moral demonstration of the inspiration of the Hebrew Scriptures.

As, in speaking of "Church and State," people are apt by the Church to mean only the clergy, or at most the ecclesiastical organization; so by the State they commonly mean, not the nation, but merely its Government. But the real greatness and force of a State lie not in the head, but in the body; not in the sovereign power, but in the people over whom and on whose behalf that power is wielded. The nation does not exist for the Government, but the Government for the nation. And as the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment, so the life of a nation—those common beliefs, sentiments, standards of right and wrong, attachments, hatreds, and pursuits, which mould the nation's character, and determine its conduct and place among other nations, are of immensely greater moment than the industry and wealth by which it is fed, and the forms and customs in which it clothes itself. In like manner it is true that not only is the Christian Church something very much greater than either its clergy or its organization, but Christianity is a far greater thing than the Christian Church. Christianity—the living power of Christ's truth and God's Spirit in the mind of men, might exist without being embodied in a Church; that is to say, without any organized society of Christians; and though its power would be incalculably diminished, it might yet be the greatest power among mankind. But a Church

without Christianity—the form of doctrine, worship, and ecclesiastical government, with no living voice of God's truth, and inspiration of His Spirit, is a dead thing, which may be artificially embalmed, and painted, and bedizened into a mockery of life, but the sooner it is buried out of sight the better.

The inquiry as to the influence of Christianity on national life, assumes that a nation has a common life, a life of its own, as truly as a family or an individual. A nation is not a mere multitude of men, women, and children, collected within certain geographical boundaries. Place a million, or twenty millions of persons, gathered from various lands and races, on a territory ample, fruitful, and in all ways fitted to be the home of a great people: they would not be a nation, any more than a dozen persons taking lodgings in the same house are a family, or a bundle of branches a tree. A nation must grow. It must possess the unity which is given by public law; government to maintain that law and to represent the nation in the great commonwealth of nations; and, if it is to be worthy the name, that reverence for its own laws and for the rights of other nations, which is to a nation what conscience is to the individual. Then it must have time to grow; time to strike root in the soil; time for new generations to be born and grow up to whom that soil shall be fatherland, and the wind of heaven that blows over it native air, and the language spoken upon it mother-tongue; time, not only for graves to be dug (for in a few months there will be thousands), but for the grass to grow on them, and the trees planted by them to overshadow them, and the moss to clothe their tombstones. Then, when the soil has been printed far and near with the footsteps of the dead, and watered with the sweat of toil and the tears of sorrow and the blood

of patriots and martyrs; when the shores have been strewn with wreck by the storms of many a winter, and tender, or beautiful, or glorious memories have begun to haunt the hills and streams, and cling round the homes touched with Time's hallowing finger; and the nation has begun to make its mark, and write its history in works that endure and deeds that men will not let die; then it is found that one great heart beats in the bosoms of the children of the land. They have their national peculiarities, ways of thinking, prejudices, weaknesses, virtues; and alas! their national follies, vices, and crimes. Scatter them over the world; let the strong arm of foreign conquest dispossess, crush, drag them into captivity, or drive them into exile; still one heart will beat in the scattered members, and even the exile's children will feel the pulse of it when their parent's eyes grow wet at the name of "the old country."

Therefore, does the Bible take great account of nations, because God takes great account of nations. In the chosen people He has given us the most perfect type of national life the world has seen. The Hebrew people were bound together by the mighty triple bond of blood, of the land, and of the Divine law and covenant. Each Israelite was a son of Abraham, and could trace his pedigree up to the national progenitor. Each family had a direct inheritance in the soil, which, if alienated, reverted in the year of jubilee; and the soil belonged to the nation not merely by right of the conquest under Joshua, but by the ancient gift of God to Abraham. Each Israelite was in sacred covenant with Jehovah, and ruled by laws of God's own making. To all this God added the powerful links of sympathy, supplied by the memory of a history such as no other nation could boast, and the glory of a hope such as no other nation has dreamed of.

Different nations evidently possess national life in wonderfully varied measure; in some it is feeble, in others mighty. In any case, these two are the greatest things belonging to a nation (as to an individual)—its history, and its character; what it does, and what it is; and these together constitute its national life. Hence it is manifest that all the institutions of a nation must be ruled by this supreme law: they ought in no way to stunt, mutilate, starve, poison, or fetter the national life, but in the highest degree to favour its full development and perfect activity; whether by wise guidance, stern restraint, bountiful protection and patronage, or by wise abstinence from all these, leaving both growth and action free.

It follows from these facts that we may look at the great question of the mutual influence of Christianity and national life from either side—the religious or the national. The argument for the state establishment of religion from the religious side is, that whether it be for the national good or not, it is necessary for the maintenance of Christianity and the welfare of the Church, that Christianity be accepted as the state creed, and the Church be established by law. This argument is refuted by the history of Christianity and of the Church for the first three centuries, and by the whole history of Christian missions. If it were not false it would be suicidal, for it would follow that Christianity is not the greatest power in the world; and if so, then not true, not Divine, not worth upholding. But the argument from the other side deserves respectful and candid attention. It is this: that although the Church can well dispense with the alliance of Church and State, the State cannot. National life, like individual life, to attain its true pitch of nobleness, energy, and happiness, must be religious, must be Christian. This, it is urged, implies a national recogni-

tion of Christianity, and this, again, implies an established national Church.

No one who believes that the Creator and Governor of nations is likewise the Author of the Bible, can doubt that, from whichever side we approach the question, our conclusions, if true, must coincide. What is best for Christianity and for the Church must also be best for the nation. Let us then make two suppositions, both, indeed, imaginary, yet so founded on fact as to be capable of shedding real light on the argument. Suppose, on the one hand, a nation in which the principle of an establishment of religion is perfectly carried out, yet where the bulk of the people are irreligious; on the other hand, a nation in which there is no established Church, or legal bond between the Church and the State, yet in which the main body of all classes of the nation are religious.

Let it be observed that although in England we have an Established Church, no attempt is made or dreamed of to carry out the principle in its integrity. The bishops are appointed by the Prime Minister, and certain livings are in the gift of the Crown, but the bulk of livings (to use the legal phrase, which always sounds as if an occult irony lurked in it, reminding one rather of sheep-shearing than of sheep-tending) are in private hands, and the right to appoint the ministers of the Church is publicly put up to auction like any other private property. The State asserts no effective control over either the doctrine or the discipline of the Church. The Act of Uniformity is totally powerless to prevent the widest diversities both in teaching and in ritual, and the authority of law, civil and ecclesiastical, is vainly invoked; the schism widens, and the scandal grows from day to day. A very large proportion of the buildings and the clergy of the Established Church have long been maintained entirely on the voluntary principle, and the com-

pulsory rate for maintaining those fabrics which, till recently, the law thus provided for, has now been finally surrendered. Moreover, about half that portion of the nation which attends public worship at all belongs to other Churches unconnected with the State. Now, in place of this anomalous condition of things, suppose every minister appointed by Government, in proportion to population, say, one for every 1,500 souls, and paid from taxation or endowments under State control. Suppose a rigid construction and strict enforcement of the compact between the Church and the State as to the doctrines taught and the rites practised. Finally, let there be no Dissenters. Yet does not all history show that you might have all this, and that every act of State might be performed in the name of Christianity and blessed by the clergy, and yet the people might be irreligious? The clergy might be moral, benevolent, and conscientious in the fulfilment of their duties, yet the benumbing influence of State officialism might combine with the pride of priestly exclusiveness to cut asunder the golden links of sympathy between them and their people, and rob their ministry of all unction and life. The national homage to religion might be but a stately civility, a stone-cold courtesy. The church-tax might be productive, but the churches empty. Christianity might lose its hold on the heart and thought of the nation, and the whole current of the nation's real life flow in channels which it neither guided nor blessed.

Now, let us be permitted to imagine a nation in which the Christian Church in all its various forms is recognized as a purely spiritual institution. Not a penny is ever paid by the State for the support or encouragement of Christian worship. The office of the Christian ministry neither entitles nor forbids a single citizen to hold a seat in the legislature, or any other public office. Each man's

status in society is determined by his character, abilities, and wealth or calling, irrespective of religious views. Christianity is alike unaided and unhindered. Then suppose that in every household—or but with rare exceptions—there is daily reading of the Scriptures, and family prayer; that in every school—the State neither enjoining nor prohibiting—the training of conscience and character is regarded as the necessary foundation of education, and every scholar is taught to think of Christ as his Model and his Master. Judges and magistrates, counsel and jurymen, come into court believing that the judgment is the Lord's. Capitalists acknowledge the supreme claim of Him who says, "the silver is mine, and the gold is mine." Merchants believe that the blessing of the Lord maketh rich; tradesmen, that a just balance is the Lord's; workmen, that what our hand findeth to do, must be done with our might, as unto the Lord. On the Lord's-day, by common consent, and force of public opinion, every wheel of the vast machine of worldly business rests, and the levity even of innocent amusement is sobered by the presence of a higher joy; and rich and poor meet together in the house of God, to seek His blessing on their earthly life, and to be reminded of the better country.

Who does not see, that the former nation, with all its forms Christianized, would be thoroughly unchristian, and that the latter—if such there were—would be in truth a Christian nation, not by force of laws and institutions, but by the free action of Christianity; by the power of the truth and Spirit of Christ on the hearts and homes of its citizens, and thus of necessity on the whole breadth and depth of national life? Imaginary cases, it may be said, prove nothing. If fairly drawn they may prove much, at least negatively; or, if they do not prove, they may teach. The two pictures just

sketched prove, at all events, that there is nothing difficult or contradictory in the conception of a Christian nation without any establishment of religion, or of an unchristian nation with an elaborate state church; and they do but exhibit the complete development of principles and tendencies actually at work. On a small but instructive scale the second picture, or no very faint outline of it, has been realized (though not in any of the so-called great Christian nations) in some of those islands of the Pacific, peopled a generation ago with naked, idolatrous cannibals, where—with religious avoidance of the Establishment principle—Christianity has been the parent of civilization and literature, and the nurse of law, freedom, and commerce. On the other hand, the working of the establishment principle, both in our rough inconsistent English fashion, and in those countries in which it has been tried more systematically, has been such as to warrant the conclusion, that the more completely it is worked, the more complete is its failure in regard to the real Christianization of the national life.

This seems the place to revert to the theory already glanced at as the noblest form of the establishment principle, according to which the nation and the Church are identical, and to inquire into the supposed countenance it derives from the example of Judaism. Without question, under the old covenant, the Nation and the Church were identical. The original foundation, on which not only all the laws and institutions of the nation, but its very existence as a people, rested, was religion. That unique series of events, partly miraculous, partly providential, by which the family of Abraham was built up into a people, and trained to become the typical nation—the most national of the nations of mankind—had its starting-point in the Divine revelation

to Abraham, and its reason in the promise that from him should descend the Saviour of mankind. The vulgar notion of modern rationalistic criticism, that the Jews regarded Jehovah as their national God, just as the Syrians regarded Baal, or the Athenians Pallas, or the Romans Mars, is (like many views of kindred parentage) a prodigious instance of learned ignorance. It bespeaks entire misconception of the whole history and position of the Hebrew nation, as given in their own scriptures. The Israelites were a holy people, a consecrated nation, not because of their separation from other nations, but because of that work and purpose for the sake of which they were separated; to be God's witnesses, the treasure-keepers of His truth for all mankind, and, in the fulness of time, the religious teachers of all other nations.* To this great destiny all was subordinated. The nation accepted Jehovah as its King, and was acknowledged by Him as His people in a public covenant of transcendent solemnity. Membership in the sacred nation was strictly defined, and sealed with an indelible personal mark. The code, civil and ecclesiastical, from the fundamental constitutional laws of morality, property, citizenship, to those which regulated the shaving of a whisker, or the hem of a garment, was of express Divine enactment, and could be neither repealed, modified, nor added to, except by the same authority. The king (when in compliance with the popular wish, a king was appointed), like the inferior magistrates—heads of tribes or elders of cities—possessed only executive and judicial, not legislative authority. His highest title—"the Lord's Anointed"—which in modern times has served to gild despotism with a burnish of religion, in fact reminded him, and reminded others, that he was no despot. His high office, as supreme judge and military dictator, presented

* See Deut. vii. 6; Isa. xli. 8, 9; xliii. 10, 21; Rom. iii. 2; ix. 4, 5.

the semblance of oriental absolutism, but it was at his peril if he mistook this semblance for reality, or forgot that he was the viceroy of Jehovah over the people of Jehovah. Even the people were not slow to remind him if he presumed too far, though they loved to be ruled with a strong hand, that their liberties were as sacred as his authority. The LORD was their Judge; the LORD was their Lawgiver; the LORD was their King. If both king and people forgot this, a supernatural, yet regular constitutional check was provided in the ministry of the prophets. The prophets were not mere inspired teachers; they were great state officers, independent alike of the throne and of the priesthood, holding their commission direct from Jehovah, and authorized to declare God's will on all great public questions, foreign or domestic, and to require implicit obedience from king, priest, and people. If the Jewish model of Church and State is to be revived in any modern nation, representative government must, if retained at all, be limited to taxation and administration; legislative authority must be renounced; the opposite theories of Divine right and popular sovereignty must alike be exploded; a body of inspired laws must be provided, and an order of prophets must be raised up to settle every disputed point of law or policy, with the decision which admits no appeal—*"Thus saith the Lord."*

Even were this conceivable, practicable, actually attained, it would be going back, not going forward. The image of ancient Israel would be reproduced, with its bondage of the letter, its adaptation to spiritual, social and political infancy, its essential incapacity for expansion and progress. But no step would be made towards realizing the idea of a Christian nation. No field would be provided for the exercise, on a national scale, of that union of law, liberty, and personal obedience, which

forms the distinguishing character, the unique glory, of Christianity considered as a system of morals—in other words, a practical theory of life.

A Christian nation, if such there were, would not be Israel over again, but something as much better and nobler than even the golden age of the Theocracy, as Christianity excels Judaism, or a true Christian surpasses an "Israelite indeed." What makes any one a true Christian? Personal obedience to Christ: the obedience not of fear, or of expediency, but of faith working by love. He has accepted his relation to Christ as the central, guiding relation of life, to which all others, the most precious and the most powerful, must be held subordinate. Christ's truth is his oracle, Christ's will his law, Christ's glory his highest aim. This supreme reference colours more or less vividly all his thought, speech, and action. Christ is the sun of his orbit, and all creatures are but fellow-planets, or satellites, or comets, or fixed stars. So, a Christian nation should be a nation with which loyal obedience to Christ, as the actual Lawgiver and Ruler of men, is the law of all its laws, the spirit of all its institutions, the key to all its politics; in which the relation to Christ is accepted as fundamental and central to all other relations, internal or external. Hitherto (and strange it seems to me that this is so little considered) national life has had to develop itself as best it might under two prodigious, if not fatal, drawbacks: the absence of any recognized law of intercourse between nation and nation, and the absence of any discovered principle for regulating a nation's internal constitution. Hence, war has been the normal condition of nations externally, and revolution internally. No political Copernican system has yet been received by the nations of mankind. Each nation wishes to be the immoveable centre of the universe, round which all the

rest shall revolve. A common centre for all has not been so much as dreamed of, if we except the attempt of the Roman Church to frame the governments of Christendom into an orrery, of which the Papal chair was the artificial sun : an attempt pitiable indeed, when regarded as a realization of the Kingdom of Christ ; but majestic and noble when contrasted with the helpless anarchy of human history. Within, nations have been bodies perpetually engaged in trying to fix their own centres of gravity. In the great empires the point of rest has been found in military force or in policy—the might of an iron hand or the craft of a subtle brain ; soon to be lost in the strife of feebler hands and brains. In our own country, during several centuries, representative institutions have secured—with one or two violent swings of revolution—a slow rate of change, often mistaken for equilibrium. The centre of gravity has slowly shifted downwards ; whether at this moment the strongest attraction is in the mass of gold or in the mass of population, is a difficult problem. But the most powerful tendency of society discerned by the keenest observers, in the nominally Christian nations—the movement towards pure and simple democracy—is a tendency destructive to representative as well as aristocratic or democratic government. If thoroughly worked out, uncontrolled by any higher law of national life, it will at last substitute delegates for representatives, retaining the form of government merely as the machinery for executing the will of the numerical majority of both sexes. For the will, passions, and interests of a despot, will be substituted the will, passions, and interest of the multitude ; and the nation which commands the largest amount of labour and capital available for war by land and sea, will rule the world. Powerful conservative tendencies, especially in old countries, may

indefinitely retard this destructive force. Ancient institutions may form a breakwater not easily undermined or overflowed. The very speed and conflict of the current may produce a backwater of reaction, on the surface of which (as in France) despotism may for a season float. War may produce unforeseen eddies and counter-currents. But the student of history and of human nature can discern no counteracting tendency strong enough to make the ultimate result doubtful, except as to time unless such tendency be found in Christianity.

If the promise is to be fulfilled, that all nations are to be blessed in Christ; and that not believing souls merely but nations are to become His inheritance; it surely follows that He must hold in His hands the remedy for these two grand hindrances to the development of national life. He must be able to furnish the central authority to which all nations will bow, thenceforth laying aside their selfish, foolish, impious strife, and learning to seek, not every land its own, but every land the welfare of others: "neither shall they learn war any more." He must be no less able to furnish the missing principle, the regulating law, for the internal order of each commonwealth; so that its legislation, and the growth and permanence of its constitution shall thenceforth be settled, not by the strife of class with class, by party tactics, personal following, and the uncontrollable force of circumstances; but by the intelligent brotherly co-operation of each with all.

Now let any one, able to comprehend and weigh these considerations, gravely ask himself whether any form of union between Church and State—in other words, any union of the organization in which men combine as Christians for spiritual purposes with the organization in which they combine as citizens for civil purposes—can possibly have the slightest power to heal these rooted

evils, or bring about these blessed results, national and international. Divesting our minds of all unmeaning verbiage and misleading sentiment; and also assuming that even the advocates of a state-church renounce the right and duty of persecution; what do we really mean by the establishment of religion, but simply these two things: Money (including money's worth, as land and buildings), and a certain position and *prestige* for the clergy,—whether of one church or sect, or of all? A dead machinery, which, according as it is worked, may do much, or little, or nothing, to promote true religion, or may even become an engine for repressing it, and a social leverage, dangerous to its possessors, and as capable of being used for mischief as for good. What can these things do, or what have they ever done, to make a nation really a Christian people, so that its foreign policy, legislation, administration, public opinion, business, amusements, education, production and expenditure of wealth, should all be supremely guided by the word of Christ, and ruled by His will? If a state-church be indeed God's chosen means for thus blessing, ennobling, sanctifying the national life, let us have not an incongruous, fragmentary system, in which antiquated inefficiency is eked out with the earnestness of voluntary effort; and huge masses of population are untouched with even that faint varnish of outward Christianity which would make them put on Sunday clothes and come to church once on a Sunday; but give us a real complete thorough-going establishment; paying the worker for his work, and taking care that he does it; paying no one a sixpence who has no real work to do; and leaving no part of the work undone, but bringing home the Gospel to every door in England. If no one wants this, or dreams of it, and men are only quarrelling about money and social position, then, in the name of all truth and honesty, let

us cease to profane sacred words, and try to name things truly, and look facts in the face.

A nation can become truly Christian in no other way than by being composed of real Christians, if not exclusively, yet in such proportion that the whole tone and course of its national life and manners shall be Christian. No action of government can effect this; no institutions, votes of majorities, endowment of clergy or of schoolmasters; nothing but the enlightened faith and free obedience of individual minds and consciences. If truth free cannot do it, still less will truth fettered. If a ministry who live by the Gospel because they preach the Gospel cannot do it, still less can a ministry who live by their office whether they preach the Gospel or not. It must be the work not of man's will, but of God's own free Spirit, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"; and spiritual liberty and establishment of religion by civil authority (which is at the backbone the power of the sword) are so irreconcilably incompatible, that they can co-exist only by the mutilation of one or both. In Religion as in Art, in Science, in Literature, freedom is but a condition, not a cause, of excellence. But it is a condition so favourable that where it exists religion penetrates as naturally as air and sunlight pass through open windows; and it is a condition so necessary, that we are warranted in predicting that for any nation to become a truly Christian nation, religion must be free.

Our line of thought inevitably brings before us the third "sub-question," started at the outset. Supposing a nation, or supposing many nations, to become thus Christian, not in mere name but in reality, what new bearing would religion—the religion of Christ—acquire on civil institutions and national governments? In other words, WHAT IS THE LEGITIMATE, DIVINELY-IN-

TENDED RELATION BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ?

Refraining from any attempt to discuss adequately this deep and wide question, I shall venture as briefly as possible to lay down certain main positions on which the answer (as it appears to me) must depend. Nothing is easier than to draw very partial and therefore false conclusions here from a limited examination of Scripture teaching. The statements of Scripture are so varied concerning the kingdom of Christ (called also the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, or simply THE kingdom), that a reader who is content with a certain selection of passages may form conclusions utterly discordant from those of another reader, content with a different set of texts; and (as always happens in such cases) each will seem to the other to be denying the plain sense of Scripture. It is but one example of these seeming paradoxes, that while we find Our Saviour expressly saying that His kingdom is not of this world; other passages (as in one of the chief prophecies of Christ, Ps. xxii. 28) as expressly declare that He shall reign over the Gentiles, that the kingdom is the Lord's, that He is the Governor among the nations, and that the time approaches when it shall be proclaimed with thunder-songs of praise that* the kingdoms of this world are become Our Lord's and His Christ's. (Compare Dan. vii. 14.)

Whatever else it is or is not, the kingdom of Christ, His reign or dominion is His supreme claim to the absolute personal obedience of every human being. He is Lord of all. The head of every man is Christ. To this end Christ both died and rose, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. Unbelievers reject this claim; believers recognize it; but our recognition

* In the oldest copies, "*the kingdom of this world is become*;" Rev. xi. 15.

does not create it. We acknowledge it because it already exists, and binds all men. Jesus Christ is the Judge of men because He is the King of men.

Here is one broad line of contrast to all the kingdoms of this world. No earthly government, absolute or popular, claims unlimited obedience. Souls are free. The greatest despot in the world is but a limited monarch. Christ alone claims the allegiance of faith and conscience, the loyalty of hearts, the obedience of love.

The kingdom of Christ, being thus a dominion over the whole nature of every man, is, by the very terms of the statement, a moral and spiritual rule. Mere outward obedience to Christ is not simply defective, it counts for nothing. A man may be a faithful citizen under a form of government which he dislikes and in his conscience condemns; a republican under a monarchy, a monarchist under a republic; but no one can be a subject of this kingdom who does not in his inmost soul prefer Christ's rule and service to every other. Hence the kingdom of Christ differs essentially from the kingdoms of this world, both in its subjects and in its methods. Except a man be born again, he cannot enter it, or even see it. Truth and love, personal persuasion and spiritual influence, which have no place in earthly states, are the weapons by which His kingdom conquers, the forces by which it is ruled. Not that the Divine King renounces the right (inseparable from sovereignty) to use the strong arm, and wield the rod of iron as well as the golden sceptre. But when the time comes for this, His word to His ministers will be not "Compel them to come in," but "Gather out of my kingdom all things which offend, and them who do iniquity." "The children of the kingdom" are "the just."

We must distinguish the Kingdom of Christ from the Church of Christ. The same persons, it is true, com-

pose them, and therefore we may without inconvenience often speak of them as identical. Yet a single phrase is sufficient to show that the distinction is both real and important. "The gospel of the kingdom" is a familiar New Testament phrase; but no one can imagine an apostle talking of "the gospel of the church." The vital principle, the formative idea, of the Church is union with Christ; of the Kingdom, obedience to Christ. The Christian Church on earth is in fact an association for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ.

Lastly, while the perfect development and right action of the Church require complete independence of all governments, corporate bodies, and associations of men in any other capacity than as Christians banded together for spiritual objects; the kingdom of Christ, on the contrary, demands for its complete realization the submission of every form of human government and society, national or other, to Christ's supreme authority. "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing not put under him."

If this be granted in reference to states, or governments, it will scarcely be denied of any other form of human society. It can be denied in reference to governments or states only on one of two assumptions: either that these possess an authority independent of—equal or superior to—that of Christ; or else that they are incapable of obedience. The first supposition is absurd. Take whichever view of government you choose, either that under whatever political form it is administered, civil government is God's ordinance, and the magistrate, as such, God's minister; or else that the government of a country is the embodiment of the popular will, and the magistrate the minister of the sovereign pleasure of the majority. In the first case, it is certain that God has ordained no authority which He has not placed in sub-

jection (*de jure*, though not yet *de facto*) to the Lord Jesus. In the second case, the stream cannot rise higher than the fountain. Men cannot create an authority superior to that by which every man is bound. The second supposition is equally absurd. Nations with their governments are composed of men. Men cannot be free collectively from laws which bind each man individually. By entrusting fifteen men with great public offices and calling them a Cabinet, or choosing 658 men to make laws and calling them a House, you cannot destroy the obligation every one of them is under to act, speak, and think as a Christian. A prime minister or legislator may be much more bound, but cannot be less bound, than a household servant to do whatsoever he does "unto the Lord." Unless it can be maintained that right and wrong belong to human conduct on a small scale only, not on a grand scale; that collective action is neither moral nor immoral; that it is wicked for one man to steal another man's purse or garotte the owner, but not for twenty millions of men to steal the territory of other ten millions, and slaughter thousands of inhabitants; that it is virtuous and pleasing to God for a man to give honest measure, and to deal his bread to the hungry, but not for a nation to make and maintain just laws and practice a generous policy;—it must be allowed that the claim of the Divine King of men to the obedience of nations and governments, is as real, direct, and supreme, as His claim on the personal obedience of every separate human being. The practical universal recognition of this sovereignty implies not the union or confusion of Church and State, but, on the contrary, their clear and complete separation, as an instalment and earnest of the obedience which both owe to Christ, who has ordained for the welfare of both that they be separate. Best is it for both that the Church be left, unhelped and unhindered,

to pursue her proper work; no splendid illusions, no dazzling, distracting ambitions, coming between her and the humble, painful reality of this work, as a work not upon masses or upon classes, but on the soul and conscience of each human being.

Thus, not otherwise, can the Church bless and regenerate the State. God works ever from the root upwards, from the hidden centre to the surface, from the little life-cell to the complex organism. No number of ungodly men, place them under what institutions you will, can possibly make a Christian nation. To call them such is to deceive ourselves with fair words. Even though all the members of the government were personally true Christians, this would go a very little way if the bulk of the people were unchristian. The moral power of the strongest government is very limited if it is not in sympathy with the nation. Of what use is it to talk of establishing religion, when a government cannot so much as establish truth and honesty? As well talk of establishing the west wind, the sunshine, or the dew. But, were that promise accomplished, "*Thy people shall be all righteous*"; were the bulk of the nation such that in every business from the polling-booth and the market up to the Cabinet, in every company from the Court down to the cottage and the workshop, the first question were not, "What is politic, customary, for the interest of the party, for the gain of the few?" but "WHAT IS RIGHT?"—then it will be seen that the Gospel is as able to bless a nation as ever was the Law. The Lord Jesus will take the helm of that nation into His own hand. Such a nation will not dream of "establishing religion," but religion will establish the nation, and righteousness will exalt it. Its officers will be peace and its exactors righteousness. Violence will no more be heard in its land, wasting nor destruction within its borders. The day

will have dawned, whose glory is indeed dim compared with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory beyond ; but the promise of which is, nevertheless, the most precious inheritance and only hope of the nations of mankind.

THE FORGIVENESS
AND
ABSOLUTION OF SINS.

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THE ambiguity of language is a fruitful source of theological controversy. If all disputants were in a position to use words in precisely the same sense, if they could thoroughly understand one another, and had grace to reason fairly, the antagonisms of Christian theology would be to a considerable extent reduced.

In physical science, or historical research, when a fact is once ascertained, a generalization made, and a nomenclature adopted, there is no further scope for passion. Interest or prejudice may be enlisted in favour of the establishment of a phenomenon, of a law, or of a name, and the progress of discovery or classification may be retarded by it ; but sooner or later, either prejudice gives way, or the new generation silently embraces the unquestionable. It is otherwise with metaphysics and theology. Here there are grave difficulties that we cannot hide from ourselves, which have a tendency to perpetuate strife, and which suffer very little modification in the succession of generations. Every human being is born into our world with capacity and temptation to ask many unanswerable

questions about itself, its origin and destiny. These force the thinkers of every period to grapple with problems which mere science perpetually proves itself incompetent to solve. Each generation takes up the scientific problem at the point where the previous generation has left it. Many of the questions once asked with mystery and fear are now answered, yet every generation, and in some measure every individual, feels the burden of existence afresh, and with an ever-augmenting sensibility. Every thoughtful man is driven inwards and Godwards in a restless search after Cause, and is compelled to postulate for himself the fundamental theses of metaphysics and theology. There is no fear that these will ever lose their interest for beings who are conscious of self, and who know that they must die. These studies are moreover, exposed to the additional difficulty, that there are no terms belonging to them perfectly current and mutually understood, and hence men of different ages and nations cannot fully comprehend each others' views on these most momentous of all discussions. It is true that philosophers and theologians have tried to define terms, and the sense in which they use them, and here and there a group of men have maintained that they do most perfectly agree in the judgment they form on transcendental facts. The agreement is, however, illusory, so far as it concerns the permanence of theologic or philosophic ideas. Those who do not belong to such fellowships often cannot understand the commonest terms used within them, and often condemn each other for holding opinions that are identical. The difficulty is increased by the fact that, in order to attain sympathy with the moral and religious experience of our fellow-men, we are compelled to translate from one language into another the recondite thoughts of different ages and peoples. It is still further aggravated in consequence of the figurative element in all metaphysical

speech, in which sounds that in their primary use connoted broadly the external and physical correspondence to some internal reality, have first utterly lost their phenomenal force, and afterwards in their passage from one language to another have been stereotyped into some conventional metaphysical signification. Thus the words "spirit," "mind," "idea," "law," "sin," "iniquity," "pardon," with many others, have passed through periods of confusing change in their signification. Words that in different languages are equivalent to each other necessarily cover different ground and overlap each other in various directions ; consequently, in passing from one language to another, subordinate ideas are often dropped unconsciously, and are as often incremented by foreign and perhaps incompatible notions. This is a necessity of our present condition, in which there is no inherent relation between words and thought. That relation is entirely arbitrary or conventional, and language is a function of the hearer's as well as of the speaker's mind : therefore, when a word is used to convey ideas mutually understood among any people, it may approach in signification a corresponding word adopted by other people ; but there is hardly an instance where the equivalence is exact, and thousands of instances will occur to every attentive reader, which show that the meanings of a word in one language are profoundly different from those of its nearest equivalent in another. Moreover, many words that deal with themes of high importance, have had to be thus transferred from Hebrew to Aramaic, from Aramaic to Greek, from Greek to Latin, from Latin to English, from early to modern English. It would be interesting to take any of the terms which are needed in the discussion of the question of this Essay, and to exhibit the variations of meaning which have accompanied their translation and tradition from people to people, and

from age to age. A single illustration may be of service, and may teach us charity in our theological conflict. Take a Hebrew* word, the fundamental notion of which is raising upwards, or lifting a thing or a part of the person, from a lower to a higher position. This word acquires a multitude of subordinate meanings, such as "to swear" by lifting the hand to Heaven, "to cry aloud" by lifting up the voice, and many similar combinations. As applied to life, it means "to take it away"; as applied to sin, it signifies to "carry off, or expiate it," and with a certain grammatical construction, it means "to procure forgiveness of sin for another." When applied to sin and calamity, it means "vicarious endurance of these for another." For each of these applications of one Hebrew word, we have a corresponding Greek word used in the Septuagint to translate its shifting significations;† but each of these words is charged with meanings distinct from the rest, in some cases wider, in others more restricted in signification than in its Latin or English synonyms. We must beware, therefore, that we do not make men offenders for a word when we are so far from any rigid definition of the precise meaning of the terms we use. We do not say that it is impossible to approximate the thoughts of Moses or David, of Isaiah or Paul; but it is obvious that when we use the terms "forgiveness," "atonement," "vicarious suffering," "deliverance from sin," "endurance of the punishment of sin," and draw important distinctions between these ideas, we may be using the translation of only one word in the Hebrew Scriptures.

An etymological disquisition of some length is needed to interpret the Greek, Latin, or English terms that are used to limit the connotation of the

* נָשָׂא

† Some of these become of importance to us; such are ἀφίημι with ἀφεσις; ἀφαιρω, φέρω and λαμβάνω.

original pictorial root-form to which we have referred. The English word "atonement" will afford an illustration of the difficulty attending all such discussions. The ordinary etymology "*at-one-ment*" shows that in the translation of the original word, the thought of English people has been taken away from the act described, namely, a reconciliation between those who had been previously at variance, until it has come to mean the process by which such reconciliation is effected.

A second cause of perplexity in dealing with theological problems, or interpreting the dogmas of theological controversy, is the correlation of the spiritual forces, and the identity in time of the spiritual conditions resulting from their activity. The non-perception of this peculiarity—one which brings Christian theology into living harmony with the methods and results of physical science—has led to unavailing disputes and to the arrangement of theological systems on essentially hostile principles. We do not mean to suggest that there is no difference of meaning in such terms as "regeneration," "justification," "redemption," "salvation," "reconciliation with God," "faith," "love," "assurance," "holiness," "adoption." A tyro in theological science or in Biblical exposition can easily run off a series of definitions, which will sharply discriminate these phrases. There have been periods when all Europe was divided into two hostile camps, on the merits of the difference or sameness of the states of mind described by these terms, and when from peculiar circumstances it became a matter of life and death to take an unyielding side in the debate. In comparatively modern times theological controvertists who have been agreed as to the distinction between "regeneration" and "justification," who have alike admitted that the one term denotes a change of nature wrought by supernatural means, and that the other expresses a change of condition and rela-

tion to the Divine government, have yet contended with exhaustless energy about the priority in time of one or the other of these changes.

Now, without entering further into the controversy it is worthy of consideration whether these terms, or the forces or states of which they treat, are not related to one another, very much as the physical forces of heat, light, electricity, magnetism and motion are correlated.

In theological and metaphysical discourse we are dealing with the union of the Divine and Human, of the Infinite and Finite in the soul of man. A Divine force or energy is discovered to be at work in human nature. A new and blessed element is penetrating the entire constitution of man. The consequence is, that in proportion as this mystery of grace and power secures its highest end—viz., a voluntary surrender of an individual to the Divine Will—and in proportion as a man yields himself to God, or is reconciled to Him, or, in other words, trusts the character and depends on the faithfulness and eternal love of God, a state of mind and heart and will has supervened on the old and alien nature, which is adequately described by one or other of these famous theological terms, according as this state is regarded in different relations. Thus (1) if this state of mind be contrasted with the older and merely fleshly condition in which it was born into this world, and if the great agent of the new life be chiefly thought of, it is called (*παλιγγενεσία*) “regeneration,” or new birth, and the result is called a new creation (*καινή κτίσις*), the substitution of the heart of flesh for the heart of stone. (2) If, however, it be regarded mainly in contrast with former indifference to God, neglect of His commandments, fretfulness under His Providence, dislike of His purity, and dread of His just displeasure, it is rightly called by that other term “reconciliation with

God" (*καταλλαγή*). The submission of the human will to the Divine Law is a victory gained by the grace of God, and is one side and aspect of the regeneration of the new creature. But (3) if this state of mind is contrasted with the previous condition of condemnation, which the righteous government of God had pronounced against all unrighteousness and sin, if it is regarded in view of the Law which threatened, and of the Lawgiver and Judge who had pronounced the sentence of deprivation and death, no term is so apt and adequate to denote this very same condition, as (*δίκαιωσις, δικαιοσύνη*) "righteousness," "justification;" yet (4) if this blessed state be looked at simply in the subjective exercises by which it is prolonged and continually verified, if we would describe the most fundamental internal process, that without which all would collapse, that which though a Divine gift is also a human act, the germ and spring of all virtuous action, the hand which grasps the Divine goodness and receives the blessing that is freely given, we apply to it the name of (*πίστις*) "faith;" but (5) if we contrast this condition with the perfectly distinct occupation of mind and bent of heart by which it was formerly characterized, there is a great word (*μετάνοια*), "repentance," which is adequate to the full significance of the contrast, and connotes also the sorrowfulness and agony of the struggle before all the former things passed away. (6) If our thoughts do not rest in the elemental region, but follow the working of the delighted spirit outwards, not only towards God but towards this universe; if we fix our thoughts upon the spirit and temper with which henceforth all duty is done, all pain endured, and all mystery encountered; if the outflow of the regenerated soul to its Father be pondered and characterized, we call it (*ἀγάπη*) "love," while "love" and "faith" in act and expression, dealing with God, are nothing less than prayer and praise and com-

munion with the Father. (7) When the new life of the soul is regarded as consciously eternal, when the so-called faith takes hold of the highest promises, and entertains no shadow of doubt as to the goodness and truthfulness of God, when death loses its sting and the grave its victory, and we seek a name for the energy with which the deathless spirit grasps the hope and meaning of the Father's love, we call it (*πληροφορία τῆς ἐλπίδος*) "assurance of hope and faith." (8) If we see that a state so calmly trustful in the Divine nature, so willing to be saved in God's own way, is one of perpetual progress and continuous confirmation, that God's work is not left unfinished, that He will complete what He has begun, we call it (*ἀγιοσύνη, ἀγιασμός*) "sanctification." (9) If we cast our eyes upon the fearful alternative of this renewed and sanctified state and look either into our own corrupt heart or the deeper darkness of unforgiven sin; if we are pondering the ransom price that was paid before any single aspect or characteristic of this state could have been realized, we call it (*ἀπολύτρωσις*) "redemption;" and if (10) we review all the new and intimate relations into which the soul is thus brought with the Father, we have yet another word to use full of sweetness and promise, viz., the (*ὑιοθεσία*) "adoption of sons," which carries the heart on to the joy of the perfected state, when the "glorious liberty of children" will obliterate the remembrance of all the bondage. The one term which covers all these and includes them all, from which in a measure they are all deduced is (*ζωή αἰώνιος*) "eternal life." I do not mean to imply by this enumeration that all these theological phrases are mutually convertible, or that all the time-honoured distinctions here referred to are mere subjective differences of aspect: they describe true relations to great objective realities, and lose none of their importance by being shown to be correlated

with each other. The law of God is a sublime fact; the Spirit and the Son of God, as the great agencies by which change of nature or condition is effected, are not mere subjective aspects of Divine Grace, but the most solemn realities in the universe—the hell of unrepented sin, the heaven of the Divine Father, and the home of the family of God are no mere dreams of our enthusiasm. Nevertheless, the theological phrases which denote the relation of our spirits to these stupendous realities do in every case presuppose the same fundamental state of the human soul, when it is under the power of the Divine will, and voluntarily and fully yielding itself to the Divine behests.

Another fruitful cause of theological controversy is an ambiguity of theological terms, due in part to a confusion of mind as to the region and object to which they refer. The same verbal noun-substantive is used indifferently to denote the state of a human mind and the act of the Divine will. It is true that justification as the righteous clemency of the Supreme Ruler must always be presupposed, whenever *justification* as a condition of a believing man is spoken of. Sanctification as a Divine process of sovereign love must be presupposed in the sanctification which is effected thereby in the forgiven and accepted human spirit, and so with the rest of these terms, God's work and man's state are connected, the one involves or presupposes the other, but they ought not to be confounded with one another. The word "justification" is obscured by this ambiguity, and unnecessary controversy has arisen out of the confusion. If we speak of justification as a method of the Divine government, we concern ourselves with the contemplation of the law and the judgment of the Most High, we have to do with the ground of acquittal, with the Divine reasons for this wondrous leniency, with that which God

has set forth as a "propitiatory," with that great circumstance or characteristic of the Lord's action, which is the true antecedent of His amnesty, and with that which in His revealed nature vindicates the wisdom of His proclamation. But when we are dealing with justification as a result effected in any one case, all is changed; we have then to do with the human antecedents of this blessed state, and with all the consequences of justification in other and more exalted conditions of mind. The antecedents of God's justification of man are not confined to subjective conditions of the human soul, but consist of God's own previous acts of sacrifice, and justice, and mercy, and point back to the eternal love and infinite righteousness, out of which the incarnation and the redemptive work of Christ sprang; the antecedents of the state of justification into which any human being is brought are his own repentance, faith, and submission to the righteousness of God. These two entirely distinct classes of consideration ought not to be confounded. Some writers have laid such emphasis on the former as to overshadow and hide the reality of the latter, and, thus tending towards a virtual Pantheism, have lost sight of the individuality of man, and the moral nature and requirements of the atonement; others have dwelt so exclusively on the human antecedents of forgiveness and justification as apparently to blunt their sense of the Divine justice, and conceal from themselves the most surprising and affecting display of the nature and heart of God.

Let me then attempt to discriminate the two great topics which are often incautiously blended, and discuss THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS in its twofold aspect and relationship, *first* as a principle and an action of the Divine will, a law of the Divine operation; and *second*, as a human experience.

Such a discussion involves the statement of principles

common to all members of the Holy Catholic Church, and to all Evangelical believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; and it involves the repudiation of much of the destructive criticism which has either reduced the work of Christ simply to a powerful moral stimulus in the pursuit of self-sacrificing virtue, thus making it equivalent to the gracious sanctifying energies of the Holy Spirit; or has dispensed with it altogether as an emaciated or disfigured torso of some wider and nobler truth. In this matter the free Churches of England (with few exceptions) hold fundamentally the great revelation which is expressed alike in the writings of the early fathers, in the decrees of the Council of Trent, in the Thirty-nine Articles, and in the Westminster and Augsburg Confessions.* There are grave

* The unsystematic exposition of the Apostolic Fathers approximates closely to Scriptural language. "The blood of Christ, which having been shed with a view to our salvation, has obtained the grace of *μετάνοια* for all the world."—Clem. I. ad. Cor., cap. v. "God Himself took our iniquities, He delivered His Son a ransom for us."—Ep. ad. Diog. Justin and Clement both quote liii. of Isaiah as their description of the work of Christ. Origen is most explicit; in 24 Hom. on Numbers, he says, "If there had been no sin there would have been no necessity that the Son of God should have become a Lamb, nor in the flesh have been led to the slaughter; but since sin entered the world, necessity required a propitiation for sin, and since propitiation is not made except by a sacrificial offering, it was necessary that the sacrifice be provided for sin." See also Jon. Hom. xxviii. 14, quoted by Baur, *Versöhnungslehre*, p. 55, and Comm. Rom., iii. 8. The entire figment which took possession of the mind of Origen, and was sustained by Gregory of Nyssa, and opposed by Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory the Great, of a ransom paid to the devil in the interests of justice, reveals through the whole of its career in the history of human speculation, the strength of the conviction that the Incarnate Son alone could have accomplished what needed to be done in securing the deliverance of man from the guilt of sin. Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Epiphanius may be quoted in equally explicit terms to show that if a theory of propitiatory sacrifice had not been elaborated, it lay at the heart of the *soteriology* of the fourth century. The philosophical theory of Anselm, which exercised so great an influence on scholasticism and the Reformation theology, though never formally admitted by Rome, or introduced into her formularies, endeavoured to explain the way in which the perfect obedience of the Incarnate God to the eternal will of God provided a *satisfactio* and *solutio* of all the unpaid *debita* of humanity, and how His supererogatory merit in dying for sin gave Him a claim to seek the immunity of all believers at the hands of the Infinite and Eternal Judge. The terms in which he described the work of Christ differed from that of earlier writers, but the same fact underlies the ideas of Anselm, and Athanasius, and Origen. See also the fragment of Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, A.D. 320, on the Soul, Body, and Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.—Ante Nicene Library, vol. xiii. There was little controversy between the Romish divines and Protestant symbols as to the fundamental truth of the part taken by the Mediator in the redemption of mankind. Thus the sixth Sess. Conc. Trid. cap. ii., "The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort sent unto men Jesus Christ, His own Son . . . that He might redeem the Jews who were under the law, and that the Gentiles who followed not after justice, might attain to justice, and that all might receive the adoption of sons; Him hath God set forth as a propitiator, through faith in His blood, for our sins, and not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Again, in cap. vii., "The meritorious cause of justification is His most beloved only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ, who when we were enemies for the great

differences as to the extent and intention of the atonement, but there is a grand uniformity of conviction so far as this, that in the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, in His obedience unto death, something was effected for the human race, without which the redemption of any from the curse of sin could not have taken place. There are, perhaps, individual men in all our Churches, who fall far short of this broad statement, and who imagine that they have exhausted the meaning of Scripture and expressed the essence of the Catholic faith, when they call attention to the force of our Lord's example and the energizing within humanity of the spirit of His sacrificial death.

It is necessary to indicate the grounds of divergence from this opinion, which is probably an ephemeral agitation permitted by the great sufferer and High Priest of man, to compel attention to claims upon the conscience which were in danger of being overlooked. In treating the other part of the subject, the nature and antecedents of forgiveness as a condition of the human soul, the sufficiency of the High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus, and the true conditions of the absolution and remission of sin will come into view; and here I am aware that the free

charity wherewith He loved us, merited justification for us by His most Holy Passion on the wood of the Cross, and for us made satisfaction unto God the Father."—The Canons and Decrees, translated by J. A. Buckley, B.A. The second Article of the Thirty-nine Articles, speaking of "Christ very God and very man," adds, "who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all the actual sins of men." The Westminster Confession of Faith, while in the opinion of some, limiting the operation and the reference of the mediatorial work, chap. viii, says, "The Lord Jesus Christ by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the Eternal Spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of Heaven for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him."—*Confessio Augustana*, Article III. "Lex damnat omnes homines sed Christus quia sine peccato subiit pœnam peccati, et victima pro nobis factus est institit illud jus legis, ne accuset, ne damnet nos qui credant in ipsum quia ipse est propitiatio pro eis propter quam nunc iusti reputantur."—*Formula Concordiæ*, p. 686. "Propter obedientiam Christi, quam Christus inde a nativitate sua usque ad ignominiosissimam crucis mortem pro nobis Patri suo prestitit, boni et iusti pronuntiantur et reputantur." The other Protestant confessions, with, of course, the exception of the Racovian Catechism, all alike sustain and reveal the faith of the Church in the sublime, unique, vicarious act of the Lord Jesus Christ in His dealing with God on our behalf, and show that whatever He may have wrought in us, there was one grand department of His work which was believed to terminate in the Government of God, and reach its fullest expression in satisfying the love and justice of the Eternal Father.

Churches of England stand on ground essentially diverse from the platform of sacerdotal functions, by which some at the present moment seem to us to be limiting the grace of God.

Before I can discuss THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS as a proceeding of the Divine Government, an act of the Divine Love, it is necessary to determine in some detail what is meant by the phrase. At first sight it suggests the idea that we are transferring to the Divine Being the features and concomitants of human society and of human relations : that we are thinking of God under forms which are supplied to us in the working of our own minds and institutions : that we are expressing the Infinite in terms of the finite, and have involved ourselves in the meshes of an inevitable anthropomorphism. The peculiarity is common to this and every other theological discussion. "The eagle cannot outsoar the atmosphere in which he floats, and by which alone he may be supported."* If we give the name of "Spirit" or "Person" to the Divine Being, if we call Him "our Father," "our Ruler," "our Judge," if we speak of His "law" or His "love," we commit the same impropriety. If we presume to reason concerning the mind, or heart, or will of God, we fall into the same error, if error it be. It is essential to every discussion concerning God, to every thought of our hearts about Him, that we should thus speak. The relativity of our knowledge, and the limitation of our faculties, compel us to conceive of God as endowed with characteristics of which the image is to be found within ourselves. The concept of Deity has always kept pace and been in proportion with the knowledge and consciousness of self. As this has been defective or lost, the concept of Deity has been degraded into Fetishism or evaporated into Pantheism. As this has been intense,

* Sir W. Hamilton, *Phil. of the Unconditioned*, Disc., p. 14

analytic and spiritual, God has been treated as a subject of high analysis, superior to conditions, the Master of circumstances, distinct from His creation, the personal cause of all phenomena. When men have lost their spirituality, and merged their own mind into the functions of the *pia-mater*, or the reaction of nerve-tissue upon the conditions of its own existence, their God has become the nexus of physical causes, the eternal force of the universe. If we believe our Bibles, there is a profound and adequate explanation of this mystery, in the fact that we are made in "the image and likeness of God." The love and pity, the justice and power of the Blessed God, are on this supposition realities, or, at least, our expressions represent to us the nearest approximation to the reality of which our nature is capable. The phrase, "forgiveness of sins," with its analogous words, presupposes "relations" between those who can sin and the Divine mind and will; and it implies, moreover, that He is capable of thinking, feeling, and doing what is at least analogous to the corresponding feeling or action of human beings. This feeling, whether or not it has shaped itself into thought, or expressed itself in words, is the basis of all religious experience whatsoever. If this is a presumptuous idea, then all religion is presumption; if this mode of regarding the Divine Being savours of unphilosophic arrogance, then all religion and all the history of science is a long record of human folly. It is enough here to say that the entire current of revealed truth flows in this channel, and that the highest manifestation of God was the human life of Him, who said "I and the Father are one."

We shall not be wandering out of the region of a sound philosophy, nor beyond the limits imposed by Revelation, if we assume that the Divine Being, the Creator and Lord of all, is able to "pardon iniquity

transgression and sin," if we think of Him as doing what in our analogous experience is equivalent to the forgiveness of sins. The English words "pardon" and "forgive" are etymologically nearly identical in their meaning, but in usage the word "forgive" is of wider reference than "pardon," and involves not only the act of a Ruler remitting the penalty which a transgressor has incurred, the clemency of one who is superior to the law which has been violated, but includes the act of love, in which those who are on comparatively equal terms seal the cessation of unpleasant relationships. According to English usage, a sovereign pardons; a friend, a father, an injured sufferer forgives. Both ideas, or the varied usage of the words, merge in one and the same radical act. Again, "pardon" is more frequently used with reference to the offender; and forgiveness refers more appropriately to the offence. In all cases, however, the individual or the society which is said to do either the one or the other, consents to forego the consequences of the offence as far as it is able to inflict them. A friend is justly offended with a friend, a father with his son, a master with his servant, a society with one of its own members, a country with a public officer, a sovereign with a criminal or a traitor. In each case the offended party is inflicting certain grievous consequences upon the offender. It may in the first instance be the suspension of intimate relations, the cessation of the mutual discharge of loving offices. It may even be in personal sorrow, grief, and tears over an unavenged transgression. A father may bear in unresisting tenderness and silent agony the wrong that has been done, or may take occasion to punish a rebellious child. A master may refuse to be served any longer by one who has betrayed a trust. A society may fine, or rusticate, or expel one of its members; a country may degrade, or exile, or execute one of its citizens; a sovereign may

refuse to interfere with the execution of the law, and thus as the fountain of authority inflict its sanction. In each case there are certain recognized consequences inflicted on an offender. They may be so slight as to amount to nothing but a coldness of demeanour, a mere cessation of intimacies, an arrest of favours; or they may amount to prolonged misery, corporal chastisement, to physical and legal death; but in each case the *pardon of an offender, the forgiveness of an offence, involves the obliteration of these consequences*. The father or friend, if he forgives an offence, reinstates the broken relation, he remits the signs of his displeasure, he feels again towards the offender as in times long gone by. The consequences of the offence, even within his own bosom, are cast out, the remembrance of it is annihilated. The various tokens of the alienation are put far away. If a society pardons an offender against its laws, it remits its fine, it opens the door for readmission to every privilege. The consequences are revoked. The power which inflicted the suffering or deprivation is alone adequate to the renewal of the earlier relations, and there is no real pardon until this power is exercised. It is not necessary here to draw the distinction between an acquittal by a jury and pardon by a sovereign. It is sufficient to remark, that a verdict of "not guilty," or a reversal of a sentence, declares the offender to have been unjustly accused and to need no pardon. Pardon assumes guilt, the acquittal of a prisoner implies the absence of adequate evidence for his condemnation, and repudiates the accusation of guilt. The two terms, though sometimes brought together in discussion, are, if supposed to refer to the same offence, mutually incompatible. If the analogies of human judicature were strictly applied, we should say that the justification of a sinner rendered pardon unnecessary, that acquittal at the bar of justice

from a charge which imperfect knowledge or deficient evidence had endeavoured to sustain, is a declaration that the transgressor in the eye of law is free from all blame, and therefore needs no pardon.

The Divine act of forgiveness of sins, the principle or method of the Divine procedure which is thus denominated, must, if we understand anything by the terms, correspond with what we mean when we use the phrase forgiveness as descriptive of earthly and human relations. Our Lord Himself frequently brings the two ideas into juxtaposition, as though the one were to be best understood from the simple analogy of the other. "When ye pray say Forgive us our sins, for we forgive everyone that is indebted to us." "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses."

But, before we can establish any analogy, it is incumbent upon us to show that the condition of man before God corresponds with that which needs forgiveness in a lower sphere of thought and action.

The forgiveness of sins by the Divine Being does, according to the interpretation we have taken of the words, involve an act, a method of dealing with us, which is diametrically opposed to the order of the universe, and which, by many of those who have endeavoured to blend theology and science, is regarded as inconceivable. The law of human life is said to be of such an inexorable kind, that any remission of the consequences of the sins against it, except by a superior law of action which includes the lower law, is set aside as a dream of the supranaturalist. The direct action of the Divine will with reference to an individual is classed among the fetishes of modern or of scholastic theology. The various consequences and penalties of sin are so constantly and invariably appended to wrong-doing and thinking

and feeling, that according to these writers there is not the least chance of escaping from them. From different points of view we are told that these consequences, which are the expression of the order of the "cosmos," or are the revelations of the will of God, must be borne to the bitter end; that the only way to be freed from them is to be delivered from the sin itself, and thus to need no such act on the part of the Most High. We are told that "forgiveness of sins," if it means anything, means the renewal of the inner life and the origination of a state of things in which forgiveness is unnecessary. Now, much truth underlies this formidable principle, but it takes a very different shape from this when submitted to a thorough analysis.

In order to contribute something to this analysis, it is necessary to remind the reader of the signification and history of the terms that are used in the discussion, to review the Biblical theory and the Christian philosophy of *sin* itself. In the pictorial Hebrew tongue there is a hint of the various explanations which more recent philosophy has assigned to the presence of evil in the universe. Thus, while רע denotes the physical and moral consequences of sin in close juxtaposition, עוֹן and חַטָּא denote the nothingness and privative character of evil, reminding us of the speculations of Augustine and Leibnitz. The word רָשָׁע touches on the sense of departure from a command, and is the opposite to יָשָׁר, while פָּשַׁע is unquestionably separation from a standard, rebellion against a command, and, though less frequently used, עָוֵל has the same root-idea. The most important word is, however, חָטָא, which sustains the same notion; it means to miss the mark, either by falling short or going beside it, or losing, missing a way (Judges xx. 16; Prov. viii. 36, xix. 2), and hence it repeatedly occurs in the sense of moral failure and transgression. Other

words, such as פָּנָה and לָעַל , convey the deceitful and covert quality of sin, and hence connote more of deliberate intention than סָפָה . The nouns derived from these verbs are sometimes (as in Psalm xxxii. 1, Exod. xxxiv. 7, Lev. xvi. 21) brought into combination to exhaust the whole nature of sin. Thus פָּשַׁע , חַטָּאת and יָצָא would, by their juxtaposition, mean separation from God, deflection from the real standard of His will, with all their terrible moral and physical consequences.

As a rule, the Greek equivalent of סָפָה and of its derivations, is the common word $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$ (with its nominal forms $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ and $\acute{\alpha}\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\eta\mu\alpha$); sometimes, however, $\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$ is used for the same purpose. The other Hebrew words are rendered by a vast number of Greek terms, such as $\acute{\alpha}\theta\epsilon\tau\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$, $\acute{\alpha}\delta\iota\kappa\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$, $\acute{\alpha}\nu\omicron\mu\acute{\epsilon}\iota\nu$, $\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$, as well as $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\alpha}\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$. This latter word, with the noun $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is the most important of all the Scriptural terms; etymologically signifying "not securing the end," it comes through a local meaning, to that of missing the mark, and it has this ethical signification from Homer to the LXX. In fact, its local meaning does not occur either in LXX. or New Testament in the simple form. It has so broad a connotation that it becomes quite generic, as in Rom. v. 13, $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha \eta\eta\epsilon\nu \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omega$, and with the article it denotes, in Rom. vii. 7-17, 20-23, and viii. 2, &c., a motive or principle of action. The singular is used to denote single acts as far as the generic character is applicable to them. The plural form seldom occurs in Pauline writings, while it is used in the Synoptic Gospels for the totality of the sinful actions of individuals.

$\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\beta\acute{\alpha}\iota\nu\epsilon\iota\nu$, with its derivative $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$, has both the transitive sense of overstepping or stepping beyond a norm or standard, and the intransitive sense of stepping aside or falling short of it. There can be no $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\varsigma$ without the existence of a $\nu\omicron\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$. Before the $\nu\omicron\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$ there

had been *ἁμαρτία*, and the coming of the law transformed it into *παράβασις*. *Παραπίπτειν*, with its derivative *παράπτωμα*, are used in LXX. as equivalents of the strongest Hebrew terms, but in later Greek writers only in the sense of falling away from righteousness, or of oversight. Still, the two words *παράβασις* and *παράπτωμα* are both used of Adam's sin, in Rom. v., and, as far as they both refer to a given norm or standard, they are synonymous. *Ανομία* is one of the most important words of the series from its direct relation with *νομός*. The word *νομός*, with or without the article, is used by St. James and St. Paul for any power which controls the life and actions of men. It is specially used, both with and without the article, to denote the law given by Moses and the law as a written declaration of God's claim to human obedience. *Ανομία* is used for (1) lawlessness and anarchy, (2) as the opposite of *δικαιοσύνη*, (3) as the translation of several of the Hebrew words עֲוֹן, חַטָּא, and חַטָּאת, (4) by St. Paul as the expression of sin in its opposition to the law and will of God, and (5) by St. John as the nearest approach to a definition of sin. Its simplest form is conduct not regulated by law, its more explicit signification is conduct in opposition to law. All the powerful Scriptural descriptions of sin imply the existence of a standard, or law or mark or ideal, which may be missed or overstepped, or may simply not be reached. The law is the will of God, the nature of God revealed in the nature of man and in the positive commands which intensify *ἁμαρτία* into a positive *παράβασις* or *παράπτωμα*.

The question arises, What is the *νομός* of which sin is the transgression? Is there a *νομός* for all moral beings, a normal condition, an ideal life of such completeness that any infraction, violation, or coming short of it, however minute, becomes "*sin*," the missing of the aim, and the frustration of the end of their being?

Here again we are face to face with God Himself. No interpretation of the nature of right, which simply supplies us with a synonym of the veritable *νομός*, covers or exhausts the subject. All the notorious answers to the question bring us back again to the same point, and bid us stand alone with God. If we equate the "right" with the "true" we are no nearer to the solution of the mystery, for our ultimate analysis of the "true" is simply "the *thought* of God." If we regard right as that which is ultimately and universally advantageous to the whole universe throughout all eternity,—and no other statement of the utilitarian theory at all meets the case,—we are again thrown back on Him in whom that universe exists, and who has supplied the spring of universal and eternal blessedness. If we call it the "eternal fitness or order of things," we are merely with some circumlocution expressing our conviction that God's own nature is the nature of right, for the order and fitness are not independent entities or ultimate facts. If we call it "the beautiful" and "the good," we are only using synonyms for the eternal nature of Him out of whose fathomless Being the truth, the beauty, the order, the harmony, and the blessedness of the universe really spring. The revelation of this nature of God provides the "criterion of right," asserts the *νομός*. The revelation has been abundant in the cosmos, in Providence, in conscience, in the constitution of human nature, above all in the ideal life of the Perfect Man, who was also the Son of God. The personal union of the Divine and human natures in the Christ constitutes Him not only the express image of the essence of God, but the living law for man. The decalogue was a prophecy of Him, as it was the transcript of the Divine thought concerning the perfect man.

Conformity with this law is the entire harmony of

the creative or subordinate will of the moral being with the supreme will of the Father; distance from God, unlikeness to His nature, conscious, intelligent, wilful departure from His standard, shows that the mind has taken another rule, and has broken with the true ideal of its nature, has made its own will rather than the Divine will the ideal of its being. In such a case the self rather than God supplies all the spring of action, and includes the whole congeries of motives. Some have maintained that sin and selfishness are identical terms—that all selfishness is sin and all sin selfishness. If we take selfishness in its broadest sense as the substitution of the self-will of the *ego* for God's will, we have an expression which is nearly identical in meaning with the Scriptural language in which it is defined by *ἀνομία*. This definition is, moreover, one which has the advantage of being easily applied to the practical difficulties that beset our investigations, and to the life of the soul.

We are now in a position to consider the *consequences* of sin. If forgiveness by God can be nothing less than the remission or removal of the consequences that accompany and follow transgression, it is incumbent upon us to analyze those consequences.

The first, most obvious, and universal consequence of sin, taken in this sense, is *increased disposition to sin and facility in sinning*. A law of our nature which is demonstrated by a wide induction of the phenomena of sense and intellect, of emotion and will, is this, that all our sense impressions, our intellectual acts, our unresisted emotions, as well as our volitions, produce corresponding modifications of our being. Our sensations when repeated become more readily the occasion of perception, our mental processes by repetition are enacted with greater ease, our emotions when in-

dulged acquire greater force over us, our volitions affect the sum of all our subsequent motives, move the very plane of our moral being, produce new elements in our character, *pro tanto* change all that constitutes our nature. The class of actions to which any man most readily reverts, creates the idiosyncrasy by which he is recognized. Indulgence in any habit of mind leads to the development of that particular habit, until its force becomes the master of the will, and refuses to conform to a new habit. Any subsequent habit acquired by diverse motive or compelled by circumstance will be acquired on the basis and ground of the previous habit. Thus the impressions of childhood and the associations of early manhood are never lost, though they may be concealed from observation or consciousness. The wrinkle on the face, the stoop of the frame, and the life-long scar will show the force of habits and actions, and the sum of impressions which, though they have faded from the memory, have left their signature behind them. This is true with reference to the motives which influence us as moral beings, the effect upon us of our past conduct. The consequences of actions are, by the law of our nature, irreversible; they bring with them facilities, dispositions, and tendencies which are as closely related to them as any series of phenomena in the universe.

Every sin or every substitution of self-will for the true "law" of our moral being has the tendency to create or strengthen the habit of such substitution. Every violation or neglect of conscience lowers the standard and weakens the voice of conscience. The pleasure of self-gratification becomes more imperious in its demands by every fresh indulgence. The habit of disregarding the highest and ultimate end of our existence grows with every voluntary surrender to the immediate interest

or nearest gratification. The quick sense of right and wrong, the sense of "I ought" or "I ought not," becomes morbidly blended with the sense of personal advantage. The soul, by revolving around the centre of self, becomes inaccessible and dead to the high and eternal interests that really concern it. Thus the first consequence of sin is sinfulness, proclivity to fresh sin, and to renewed departure from the living law. It is not erroneous to speak of this "consequence of sin" as a *part* of the penalty assigned to the commission of sin by God's administration of the universe. It is in fact involved in the great Johannine definition of sin, for *ἀνομία* in itself describes a judgment already passed by the supreme Lawgiver. Sinful propension is at least a consequence inflicted by law upon transgression. It is one element of the order of the universe assigned by Him who has originated all moral beings, and it is part of an arrangement, moreover, which appears to stretch through the whole kingdom of God. It is brought about by the action of the same law through which the Spirit of Grace works towards the eradication of evil from the heart of man, and by which all the influences of truth and love and righteousness become permanent in the soul. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The law of augmenting sinfulness and the law of the Spirit of life in human nature are alike illustrations of a remarkable peculiarity of all our mental states and changes.

Further, the augmenting sinfulness of the sinner is a *penalty*, because it lowers him in the scale of moral beings, it reduces his capacity for enjoyment, it severs him in its measure and degree from the sources of blessedness and life. As there is no suffering more keen for a mind capable of higher things than to find that by foolish waste

of energy on trifles, it has lost its powers and all its former interest in the great things of the understanding, so, in like manner, there is no suffering more bitter for the moral nature than to discover the degrading effect of sin, to find itself taking pleasure in unrighteousness, to discover the imperious claims of the flesh, and to feel the pangs of a weak and unprincipled will, impotent in resisting what it sees and knows to be evil and deadly. It is torment to find the walls of the prison-house of selfishness, the gyves and bolts of the cruel taskmaster, indulgence, resisting the nobler yet feebler impulses of the soul, and scoffing at the tremulous voice of protest which the drowsy or half-paralyzed conscience whimpers forth from the depths of the dungeons of despair.

The consequences of sin are not limited to the degradation of the sinner, or to the weakening of his power of resistance to sin. There is, further, the *direct accusation of conscience*, there is the sense of guilt or punishableness. This may be nothing more than fear of ulterior consequences either in this world or the next, the anticipation of suffering as a penal infliction or a natural result of transgression. This accusation of self by self, and this gloomy surmise of the future, may never take any other or better form, and may be powerless in arresting the fresh commission of sin. Many find in the ordinary course of human affairs all the explanation of this state of mind that they need. By many modern writers of a particular school of philosophy it is treated as the simple consequence of a state of civilization, the observation and calculation of advantages. This is not the place to repudiate such an interpretation of that which we regard as one of the most constant and awful proofs that we have, of the moral government to which we are subjected.

Suffering is, in a vast majority of cases, the obvious

consequence of the violation of the moral law. Reward and punishment follow upon the heels of virtue and vice. Even though at times they may be delayed, in the long-run the order of human affairs shows, as Butler says, on which side the Ruler of the universe takes His stand. The argument of Butler has not been gainsaid, even though at times the history of successful villany or apparently undeserved suffering may make us pause in terrible unrest, and say, "Is there a God that judgeth in the earth?" We dare not assert that human suffering is by any means always the measure of personal transgression. Holy Scripture, in many places, shows that suffering does not furnish any practical criterion of personal virtue or vice. The Book of Job was an elaborate disproof of the old canon of judgment. Those eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell were not greater sinners than all the rest of the dwellers in Jerusalem. The sin of one is often punished by the sufferings of another. Balaam, Jeroboam, and Ahab made Israel to sin; they were the most guilty persons in the sight of God and men, but the punishment fell on the whole community. David numbered the people in the pride of his heart, and the pestilence carried away its thousands, punishing him in the greater sufferings of his people. Our modern rationalists will neither admit the historical fact, nor accede to the explanation thus given of the occurrence, but they cannot deny that this influence is the intentional teaching of Holy Scripture; and they do not demur to a statement which needs no laboured proof, viz., that *sin* and *suffering* are shown in the Bible to stand in very close and impressive relations with each other. It does not seem possible to hide from view the organic relation, which links whole generations of men so closely together that the sin of one man may sometimes be expiated by decades and centuries of suffering on the

part of others. Physical weakness and anguish, torture of mind, straitening of circumstance, shame and blood-feud, are often the heritage of personal transgression and licentiousness. Whether we can square this with justice or not, few care to deny it. We are all suffering, in our temperament, temptations, circumstances, the consequences of other men's sins as well as of our own. It is thus that God has made sin to seem and to be exceeding sinful. No sinner perisheth alone in his iniquity. No one dieth unto himself. Every sin has its hideous progeny. "The seed of the serpent" is the whole "generation of vipers." The contagiousness, infection, and hereditary transmission of sin itself are not the limits of its evil. It curses the third and fourth generation; it punishes the ends of the world; it actually injures, weakens, inflicts disadvantage on the distant and the unborn age.

Alienation from God is another distinct consequence of personal transgression or *avopla*. It is true that no sin can be committed by a moral being without involving estrangement from the living God, yet the direct consequence of any wilful act of selfishness or rebellion is to widen the breach between the soul and God, to induce petulant thoughts of the sanctity of His requirements, to create dangerous fancies concerning His true nature, and too often to blaspheme the august name of God, and degrade the image under which He is conceived and worshipped. Discordance with the Divine ideal and rebellion against the Divine law, have an awful tendency to promote and diffuse themselves, and, unless they can be checked, will end in eternal death. If God and the sinner come into any personal relations whatever, such alienation only follows the psychological law of the estrangement and repulsion of minds, and must augment, unless the stronger Mind and Will resolve,

by endurance, long suffering, magnanimous remission of consequences, to overcome the weaker. Such condition of utter alienation from God is one of the most patent facts in the universe, whatever be its ultimate or proximate cause.

DEATH is the ultimate consequence of sin. Independently of the sin of the human will and sinfulness of human nature,—*i.e.*, apart from the *peccatum originis humani generis*,—the death of the body might be a joyous and sublime event. Sin has conferred upon it a terrible significance, and has wrapped it in impenetrable mystery. If we could suppose a sinless race upon the earth, with a human will, in spontaneous but perfect accord with the Divine will, we should be in the midst of a community to whom—even if death were needed as a disciplinary event in the Divine education of the soul—it would suggest no terror, and would imply no punishment. Sin, estrangement from the Divine Life and beauty and law of the universe, has made the act of physical death the epoch of some startling and fundamental change in our relations with our Maker and His laws. Hence it becomes the synonym of the curse on sin, the type of its most malign operations, and the name of the entire condition into which the soul is itself brought by sin. In the language of Christ and His Apostles, the death of the body is actually inconspicuous and insignificant by the side of that death of the soul of which it is the type.*

Cold insensibility, hideous corruption, utter dissolution, are only types of a state of soul which sin induces, and which confers on death new and undefined horror. I do not enter upon the full meaning that may be revealed in the words “eternal death” or “second death.” There is no light, no rest or joy in them; there is no solution of its mystery. It is enough for my present

* Compare Ephes. i. and ii. with John xi. and vi.

argument, whatever they may mean, that they are the ultimate issue of sin.

A momentous question arises here. Are these consequences of sin penal inflictions, are they to be attributed to the Lawgiver and Lord of the universe? Are we to regard them as the direct or indirect work of the Most High? It is a momentous enquiry, because whichever of the two answers be given, we come face to face with new and grave difficulties. If God be the author of these consequences of sin, is He not the author of sin, and the first cause of a large proportion of the sinful and arbitrary violations of His own laws? On the other hand, if He be not the origin of these consequences; if they do not flow forth from the fountain of His will; if the suffering and sinfulness consequent upon sin be not the production of the supreme order of the universe, then they are the orderly outworking of the great kingdom of evil, the regularity and far-reaching sweep of whose dominion would constitute a formidable rival even to the throne of God. We seem by this enquiry to be driven on the dilemma either of Pantheism or Dualism. Is there no escape from it? The only reply to this question, but we conceive an adequate one, is this, that the suffering consequent upon sin is *right*, is part of the *nature* of the Divine Being, is of the very essence of His goodness.* The suffering is brought about in the working of those ultimate laws, in and by which all moral beings exist. These laws are themselves God's way of dealing with moral beings in that part of their nature which is impersonal, their ultimate constitution. Sin against the highest law will revenge its own violations in various degrees and forms of suffering. The most serious and awful of these consequences, the most difficult to understand as compatible with the goodness and justice of God, is that sin-

* Aug. Confessiones, L. IV.

fulness should be engendered by *sin*, and in consequence, moreover, of laws impressed on all moral beings by a beneficent Ruler. The law is identically the same law by which moral excellence, and self-restraint, intellectual vigour and holy energies, are quickened and matured.

As with the growth so with the decay of every living organism—the co-operation of the Divine will is imperatively required. In the same manner the Divine order and the eternal force co-operate with, and underlie all the energies of the free will, and are present in the holiness and in the sin of every living creature. Even if free-will be the highest analogue of creative power, God has not set it to work, and severed it from His own existence. Every nerve, every blood corpuscle, every atom of the living frame is the scene of creative energy, not self-dependent force. All the laws of association and habit, of imagination and deduction, are only God's ways of acting in the sphere of conscious existence, just as the laws of motion and light reflect His modes of operation elsewhere. The *laws* of existence are independent of personal beings and responsibilities, and the effect of the laws of habit upon the sinning proclivities or sinful actions of men, rapidly and universally inflict the most awful penalty upon the transgressor. As the author of those laws He is indirectly the author of the sins they lead the sinner to commit; as the creator and upholder of the human spirit He is the creator of the sinning and suffering moral agent; it is useless and hopeless to deny this much of the facts of the universe. Nor is the responsibility of the sin thus taken from the sinner. This is seen by the old illustration of the murderer and his knife. Unless the ten thousand physical laws and arrangements, which are necessary to the effectuation of a crime, be preserved intact, the catastrophe need not result from the action of the murderer's will. All the perpetuity

and permanence of natural law, and of the qualities of things, are simply the expression of the Divine method of acting with and in these things ; but such co-operation of the Divine will is far from complicity with the act of the transgressor. In no other way can we regard the Divine arrangement as conducing to the permanence and disastrous consequences of sin. But the degree to which it extends declares the *penal* character of these consequences, or in other words, the fact that they spring out of the legislative order of the universe.

I return, therefore, to the main point of these enquiries, viz., the Divine FORGIVENESS OF SIN. If this phrase has any meaning at all corresponding with the human circumstances which suggest such a gracious arrangement, then God's forgiveness must signify the *removal of all the consequences* which are inflicted by the legislative order of His will. God's own act of forgiveness and man's state of forgiveness must imply a gracious and supernatural change. There must be a change in God's method of working in us,—the operation of a new law of life. As viewed on the Divine side,—and with this I propose to deal *first*,—the principle of Divine government must in its own nature have been supplemented or developed, so that the consequences which the laws of His universe otherwise continuously entail upon the sinner, are graciously, mysteriously arrested. The fact we here assume and are trying to analyze is this, GOD HAS FORGIVEN SINS ; and this fact, *viewed apart from* the conscious experimental change in the sinner, to which we shall presently recur, may be thus stated :—A sinner suffering the consequences of his own sins, and inheriting the various disadvantages of his father's or his brethren's sins, with propensities to evil, and with whole trains of terrible possibility surrounding him, which his own evil desires threaten to fire, is found

to be repentant, trustful, hopeful about the future, loving the God who made him, forsaking his evil way, reconciled to the Great Lawgiver. The physical suffering which he had merited may smite him, but, by a strange alchemy, the curse is transmuted into a blessing,—into a reason for deeper reverence, trust, and obedience. Now this *change in the man is a change of Divine administration*. It takes its origin in the law of the Divine working. God has wrought all these works in the sinner. We ask, then, has the law which linked sin with sinfulness, guilt, suffering, and death, been abolished or suspended? Is there a new way of judging and ruling moral agents,—one that links sin with repentance, faith, blessedness, and life? It is not sufficient to answer that repentance, desire for amendment, faith in God, reconciliation with Him, are the introduction of a new force into the case, and furnish an adequate explanation of the Divine act of clemency, because that supposition affords no explanation of the repentance or the faith itself. If forgiveness include the remission of *all* the consequences of sin, then repentance, faith, and the spirit of forgiveness, are themselves in part the consequences of the Divine forgiveness. They point back to the Lawgiver and Father, and presuppose some principle of administration which they do not explain.

The Bible contains statements on this head which are apparently contradictory. Whole chapters in Ezekiel's prophecy seem pledged to the statement, that "the soul that sinneth it shall die!" Elsewhere we are told that God is "jealous," is a "consuming fire." "He will not forgive your sins," said Joshua. "He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall be destroyed without remedy;" "Can an Ethiopian change his skin?" &c.; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are

written in the book of the law to do them." "In thy sight shall no man living be justified;" "The transgressors shall be destroyed together, the end of the wicked shall be cut off;" "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear;" "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil;" "Hear, oh earth, behold I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened to my words, nor to my law, but rejected it;" "How shall I pardon thee for this?" These were the burning words of the Hebrew Prophets.

On the other hand, however, even from the dawn of revelation, we are also assured, that "Jehovah is slow to anger, and of great mercy, and repenteth him of the evil;" "He is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;" "Bless the Lord, who forgiveth all thine iniquities;" "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings;" "He being full of compassion forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath;" "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God, wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye;" "Let the wicked man return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon;" "The Lord descended and proclaimed the name of the Lord, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin;" "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us;" "Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord is mercy, and

with him is plenteous redemption ;” “ There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared ;” “ Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by transgression ;” “ Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” It would be easy to multiply quotations from Holy Scripture in vindication of both of these aspects of the Divine government.

How can we reconcile these views of the same God in the same revelation of His character ? All the facts of nature proclaim His righteousness in punishing sin, in linking sin with sinfulness, with suffering, with death. All the accusations of conscience, most of the conclusions of philosophy, and the chief doctrines of the great Oriental theosophies call for the perpetuation of the order, of the legislation, of the fate which seals the doom of sin. Even where the moral consciousness is partially awakened, and where the Divine law is frittered away into ceremonial travesties of its sanctity, there the craving for this righteous judgment is strongly marked. On the other hand, our highest intuitions and the noblest revelations of the Divine Being point to a diametrically opposite conclusion, viz., that God is merciful and gracious, that He passes by transgression, is mighty to save, that He is love, that He is able to deliver from fate, to set free from sin, to redeem from vain conversation, from the power of the enemy, and even from death itself ; that He is able to give repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life. Have we then two Gods, one of whom is the Destroyer and the other the Deliverer ? one of whom is righteous and the other merciful ? This is the conclusion of many a heathenism, and the practical charge brought against Christianity by some of our modern rationalists. Yet the Holy Scriptures, which present both aspects of the Divine character and government, repudiate all dualism in the essence of God.

Christian theology has blended the apparent discord

by its harmony of these attributes, and by the discovery that, pervading the entire revelation of God from Abraham and Moses to Paul and John, there is a Divine aspect or Person of the Godhead, who combines in Himself all the righteousness and all the love of God. There is a wondrous light and unspeakable help in the unveiling of One who expresses all God's vengeance against sin, and all His triumph over it; who embodies in Himself all the laws of moral agents, even all the eternal rectitude which consociates sin, suffering, and death, and yet arrests the curse of sin, turns punishment into salvation, and bestows upon a dying race eternal life. The power of the Gospel is due to this grand unity in the Person of the Christ of God. If, therefore, using the language of Scripture, we say God forgiveth iniquity, and if we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven, forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us," it is because we believe that God can and will do to us in our sins and debts, with all their desperate complexity, what we do to those who have sinned against us,—*i.e.*, by analogy we are led to hope that He will remove all the richly-deserved consequences of our transgressions, and give us in their stead, faith, repentance unto life, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

The ultimate grounds of such hope must, by the very nature of things, be outside of us, and be the producing cause of all the gracious preliminaries which precede, in our own experience, the full realization of such a fact.

There must be ground for this act of God in His own wonderful nature. It might have been as unimportant for us to understand any of the antecedents of this act of our Heavenly Father, as it is for us to grasp the beginnings of life in the physical world, or to comprehend the changes which have accompanied the progress of

creation. We might have been left with this unsolved problem in the regions of moral and spiritual science, and have simply been able to observe that repentance unto life did not infrequently take place like an original creation in the sphere of a human soul ; we might have attributed it to Divine interposition, to an uncomprehended mystery of love, and have been most thankful that there was such a sublime fact as the forgiveness of sins, the arrest of curse, the blotting out of transgression, the obliteration of fear, the triumph of love. We admit that this is all which many theologians have to suggest to our understanding. Still, the revelation of God has told us something of the deep movements of the Divine will, and has told it in such a form as to make the knowledge highly efficacious in securing the result. But this change must be independent of adequate knowledge on our part, of the means of redemption and forgiveness. The Divine life must have been working mightily in the breast of those who have never duly recognized its origin ; nor is it possible that correct *theory*, as to the method of the Divine operation, can be essential to the continuous working of the love and power of God. It is, however, important to state what grounds for the Divine forgiveness of sin are discoverable in the teaching of Holy Scripture.

The Scriptures uniformly declare that the Eternal God and He alone can forgive sins committed against Him. The love of God is the origin, not the consequence, of the reconciling or redemptive process. (Isaiah xliii. 25 ; John iii. 16 ; Titus iii. 4, 5, 6.)

The analogies of nature and human government show that a supreme act of the Lawgiver Himself is essential to any forgiveness that is worthy of the name. Here philosophy and theology, Jew and Greek, the guilty conscience and the pure reason, utter the same voice.

Guilty conscience and enlightened moral conscious-

ness in the Hebrew nation, and in other Semitic tribes, as expressed also in the religious systems of many peoples, have given loud, though not unanimous, testimony to the conviction that something more than subjective self-originated changes are needed to move the Omnipotent, and introduce the law of forgiveness into the laws of the universe, and also to act upon it. The guilty conscience with offerings of sacrifice and blood has sought from God, the great Fountain of right, that justification which He alone can give. He who put the spirit and power of forgiving personal injuries into a human soul, thereby revealed Himself; He who made a mother's heart and taught the act of unselfish love, proved that He had devised the means of forgiveness, and had slain the Lamb before the foundation of the world.

Symbolic facts and events are recorded in Holy Scripture, which show that the co-ordination of a saintly human will with the Divine will may be the ultimate ground of reconciliation between the Supreme Being and the sinful creature. (Exod. xxxii. 29-35; Num. xvi. 46-50; xxv. 13; Ps. cvi. 30, 31.)

The sacrificial system of the Old Testament exhibits a multitude of arbitrary difficulties raised in the way of the ceremonial approach to God; and, while these observances are condemned as hopeless folly if made a substitute for righteousness, they must perpetually have suggested and incited the enquiry, "Wherewithal shall we appear before God?" and did urgently call for a priest, a sacrifice, and a temple, which might take towards moral evil the part which these shadows of the Christ had taken towards ceremonial defilement. The Prophets and Psalmists assured Israel that there was such a Priest, such a Sufferer, such a Victim of sin, and that Jehovah was able to forgive.

The great theme of the whole revelation of God in

Holy Scripture, from its first page to its last, is the union of God and man in the only-begotten Son of God. This was the hope of the world indicated in a thousand ways—in blighted hopes, in gorgeous visions, in vast systems of mythology and theocracy, in the Eastern theories of divine incarnation, and in the Western boast of human apotheosis. For this the world was groaning with insatiable earnestness. The preparation for it was deeply seated in humanity, and in all the purposes and nature of God Himself.

The fulness of the times came, and that event took place which was the dividing-line between the past and the future eternity. Viewed on its strictly material side, a very small circumstance occurred in the outskirts of the crowded metropolis of a petty province of Imperial Rome, yet words fail to expound its importance. The intellect of the first three centuries of the Church was almost exclusively occupied in striving to place this fact within the compass of its formal thoughts. There has never been a generation since, when the thoughts of men about this fact were not among the chief motive powers in the intellectual and moral world. At this moment the "person," the "nature," the "claims," the "offices," the "flesh," the "body," the "spirit," the "presence" of the Lord Jesus Christ supply the food of speculation, the springs of obedience, sacrifice, and beneficence to all the most advanced minds of the civilized world.

God sent His Son out of His infinite love. The desire of all the nations came, and thus the cycle of sin and corruption, with its dread contagion and fearful peril, was arrested. The cycle was broken by the appearance of the second Adam, as certainly as that old-world order had been disturbed by the appearance of the first Adam, and as certainly as a disturbance of our notions of human development and order will take place

when He shall come again and every eye shall see Him. That part of the Divine forgiveness of sins which consists of the arrest of the consequences of sin in humanity, the overruling of the law of habit and of hereditary and contagious transmission of sinfulness and corruption, is conspicuously revealed in the simple fact of the Incarnation, in this sublime revelation of the Father's heart. Hence we find the Lord Jesus Christ represented as claiming the Divine prerogatives of forgiving sin and of restoring forfeited life. He claims to be the Patron, King, Intercessor, Arbiter of the human race. He declares that He was the gift of the Father's love to the world; that He was the Bread of life and the Light of the world. He knew that the Father heard His prayer always. "I am," said He, "the vine, and ye are the branches. No man cometh unto the Father but by me." This kind of testimony is abundantly reiterated by the Apostles, who declare that saved men are members of His body, living stones in the temple that is built on Him and that is filled by the Father's glorious presence. There is little debate among Christians as to this sublime fact, though there may be as to the most correct and fitting name by which to designate it.

So far, then, the Incarnation of God may be regarded as a great fact outside of our experience, but affecting the whole government of God, providing the antecedent and ground of the most essential and solemn element in the forgiveness of sins.

Many men appear to complete their estimate of the renewal and salvation of mankind when they have accepted this supernatural and sublime fact; they have here, it is true, more than it is possible ever to exhaust; and, doubtless, the whole truth of the Atonement is implicitly contained in the Incarnation, in the Lord's taking upon him all our nature.

But the self-revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ is not limited to the fact of His Incarnation. Thus (John i. 29) Jesus admitted the appellation, "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," and He said that He was Himself the Bread of life, and that no man could truly live without eating His flesh and drinking His blood. (John vi. 33-58.) Amid the glories of the Transfiguration, He pondered the decease He was about to accomplish, and made the revelation of His Divine humanity the basis of His instructions with reference to His cruel death. As the good Shepherd He was prepared to lay down His life for His sheep. (John x. 15-18.) In the institution of the communion of His body and blood, He declared that His body was broken for His disciples, and His blood shed for the remission of sins. (Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxii. 20.) He told His disciples that He gave His life a ransom in the stead of many. (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45.) He claimed the great oracle of Isaiah liii. as a description of Himself—a claim which was reiterated on six different occasions by the Evangelists and Apostles; so that, whatever was the meaning which Jews or modern critics, or even Isaiah himself, may have put upon it, the Apostles of Christ unquestionably treated it in its entirety as the best account they could render of the suffering and death of Christ. (John xii. 38-41; John i. 29; Acts viii. 30-35; 1 Peter ii. 21-25; Matt. viii. 17; Mark xv. 28; Luke xxii. 37.)

The whole of the life of Jesus was the expression of mysterious sympathy between the Sinless and the sinner. Though He never lost the conviction that He was the beloved Son of the Father, "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." The cup of agony which the Father gave Him to drink was a Divine appointment, not a freak and demonstration of human malice and folly. The most terrible moments in His passion, so far as we are per-

mitted to understand them, were when the burden of His task made Him conscious of a momentary yearning that that cup might pass from Him, and the intensity of His anguish led Him to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He was actually "numbered with transgressors;" His heart broke with sorrow over human sin and sympathy with the Divine law. The death of the Prince of life, the resurrection and ascension of Christ, the gift to His disciples of power and insight into the meaning of His life, passion, and glory, led them to proclaim, in His name, repentance and remission of sins. Now, it is undeniable that the Apostles, in their treatment of the relation between the death of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, make that relation to consist in part of the moral effect produced upon the sinner by the contemplation of the self-sacrifice of Christ. Thus, they speak of God sending His Son to bless His people in turning them from their iniquities, and of Christ having set His disciples an example of sacrifice, humility, and self-abnegation. (Acts iii. 26; Phil. ii. 5; 1 Pet. ii. 21; 1 John iii. 16.) They do so, however, in a way which proves that they held the salvation which Christ has effected to be more than an exhibition of the way in which we may save ourselves. It would be possible to take isolated passages (such as Eph. iv. 32 to v. i., and 2 Cor. v. 14, 15), and to see in them simply the high inducement which the sacrifice of Christ exerts on all who adequately appreciate it, to live no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again, to walk in love as dear children, and thus to share the sublime spirit of the holy child Jesus. But there are many utterances of the Apostles which imply a conviction on their part that Christ has not only set us an example of humility and love and submission to the Father's will, but that, in His sufferings and death and resurrection,

He has provided the means by which the Eternal Father secures for us the forgiveness of sins. (Acts x. 34-43, xiii. 38, 39, xxvi. 18, 23; 1 Peter i. 18-21; 1 John i. 7, ii. 1, 2; Rom. iii. 25, iv. 25; 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 5, 6, 7; Col. i. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 4, 5.) A theology which ignores the effect of Christ's work upon the heart, the mystic union between the suffering Christ and the broken spirit, and the degree to which the Atonement contributes to the production of this spiritual change, is radically defective; but a theology which confounds the antecedents of God's actions with the beginnings and conditions of a new human experience, will also miss the meaning of the New Testament. All that can be said on the moral effect of the sufferings of Christ is augmented in weight and importance when the full nature of that which Christ was effecting for the human race comes clearly into view. If the sufferings of the blessed Lord are set forth to move our affections, and show us the sublimity and majesty of the love which is stronger than death, without revealing the nature of that love or the true motives or consequences of that sacrifice, it falls far short in its moral power of the representation that demonstrates its unique and infinite value, and its personal claim upon our allegiance. The moral efficiency which some of our opponents contend for, as the adequate interpretation of the atoning love of Christ, would be equally strong whether the records of the Gospel were true or fictitious, the dream of a poet or the crisis of a world.

In Rom. v. 6-10 the death of Christ is represented by the writer as the consideration in virtue of which the ungodly may be regarded as just; and in chap. iii. 21 forgiveness of sins is solemnly averred to be a *righteous* as well as a loving act, because Jesus Christ is set forth as a propitiatory offering.

The entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament is

claimed as an anticipation of the sacrificial act of the great High Priest. The new covenant of spiritual obedience, by which God reproduces in humanity a transcript of His own moral nature, is closely associated by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews with the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ. (Heb. viii. ix.) The moral effect of this great spectacle of love and sorrow would not have been salutary if none of the grounds of it were expounded to our reason. The emotion excited by it would have been one of indignation against the persecutors of the Holy One, of despondency at the awful risks of goodness, and of smothered despair at the thankless sacrifice imposed by the course of human affairs upon the innocent victim of human depravity and Divine injustice. But if the explanation furnished by the Apostle Paul be the true one, that God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh for sin, and thus condemned sin in the flesh (Rom. viii. 3, 4); that Christ died for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity (Gal. i. 3, vi. 14; Tit. ii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 5), and be Himself a ransom (*ἀντίλυτρον*) for all; that He "our passover has been sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7); that "Christ purchased us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13, iv. 4); that we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins, through His *blood* (Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14), then the moral force of the Cross becomes apparent. Paul's own explanation of the mystery of the death of Christ helps us to understand how deliverance from the body of sin and death is obtained through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. vii. 25, viii. 1); how the world is crucified by the Apostle, and he and we in baptism are crucified, dead and buried to sin; then the voice of conscience is recognized, the righteousness of God is manifested, and a sufficient reason is given for adoring gratitude and love. In vindicating the moral aspects which are unveiled in a true understanding of the objective facts

occurring in the Divine government of the universe, we are not to be charged with making them the sufficient tests of the adequacy of the atonement of Christ, nor are we confounding them in their essence with it; but when the so-called moral theory of the sacrificial work of Christ is presented exclusively as the sum total of Divine revelation on this deep theme, it is well to review the inefficiency of arguments, which, while they are addressed to the reason and conscience, ignore the true basis on which they would present their most formidable appeal.

Various efforts have been made by Christian thinkers to explain the method by which the agony and death of the Holy One became the ground of the forgiveness of sin. Theologians have systematized these statements of Holy Scripture, and have deduced logical inferences and made gratuitous hypotheses to get over special difficulties, and have often hampered themselves by the consequences of their logic. There is no space here to enter into these discussions. It is enough for our present purpose to observe that if we are told that the Divine Governor and Father is able to forgive sins—*i.e.*, to remit the consequences of sin, *i.e.*, treat sin against the laws of His universe in the spirit and freedom in which a human father or judge or king can remit the consequences of sins against human laws or human love—then the conscience and intellect of man will search eagerly for some revelation of the principle on which this is done. The multiform efforts of mankind to express the Divine and the human condemnation of sin in the sacrificial act by which the sinner himself is delivered from the consequences of sin, which is thus condemned and punished, point to the revelation of God, and ask for some explanation of the highest law of the universe, the law of forgiveness.

Every act of heroic self-sacrifice by which a suffering man has taken upon himself the consequences of an-

other's sins, has exhausted their curse, and inspired the emotion of sanctifying gratitude and love ; every holy effort made in vicarious self-abnegation, by which the power of evil habit in some other individual is arrested and exorcised ; all the love of mothers, which has been strong as death ; all the forgiveness of brothers, which has often cut deep into the quick of the soul, are sometimes referred to as expressing the idea of atonement. It is said that the vicarious suffering of Christ is on the same line, belongs to the same category, differs from these only in degree, not in kind, and that all alike are merely expressions of this great law of human affairs and Divine government. This appears to me to be a most imperfect way of tracing relation between the sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifices of men, and their relation to the Divine forgiveness of sins. They are connected, doubtless, and such analogies are of service when dealing with those to whom the bare notion of Divine forgiveness or atonement is incomprehensible.

The true explanation of their mutual relations seems to be in this : that in Christ's incarnation and sacrifice a great force, or law of Divine operation, was introduced into the universe, which is as diffusive as is light or heat in the physical cosmos, as fundamental as attraction or motion is to the constitution of matter, as important to the development of humanity as life itself, and that the Word made flesh was justified in saying that He had life in Himself, and that he was the Light of the world, and the only way to the Father. There is deep meaning and sober sense in God having created all things by Jesus Christ, and in the Lamb having been slain from the foundation of the world. He is the Divine ground of the Father's method of treating both sin and sinners, and therefore from the beginning, under all dispensations, and with all nations, there has been an arrest of the curse ;

a thousand influences have been at work which have revealed the Law of God, and which have blended righteousness with the Love. Human understanding has always failed to see how these great forces of Love and Law could surge from the same centre, and it was only in the sacrificial life and death of Jesus that the mystery of God's universal government ever reached a full expression.

To many theologians the agony of Gethsemane or Calvary has no appreciable relation with these fundamental changes in the mode of the Divine government; and vehement efforts are made to get rid of the term and idea of punishment, or penal infliction, in the case of Him who, as a dear child, walked in the love, and lived in the light of the Father's face. Still they fall back upon and admit the fact of His suffering, and endeavour in various ways to account for it. With some it has been produced by the proximity of the Holy One to sinful life, and fanatical prejudice; with others it has been the adequate repentance rendered to the Law of God from the ground of human nature: the infinite grief and sorrow of the Most High expressed through the inspired and holy soul of a man over the sins of the human race. These expressions all fall far short of the evangelic narrative; they are feeble hypotheses by the side of the strong language of the Apostles, and do not touch the deep problem of the death of the Prince of life. But even taking them as they stand, and for a moment going no farther than they seem to reach, the questions arise: Whence did the suffering spring? Whence came the agony and bloody sweat, the death-stroke and the shedding of the precious blood? Did these not arise out of the order and law of the universe which has linked man with man, and sin with sorrow and death? He came into the world, and by His own Divine life, arrested the curse of sin, the propagation of sin, and the deceitfulness of sin; but He did

more, He took the temptations and conflicts of mankind upon Himself. They were real temptations. It was a true conflict with the Prince of this world. In the victory that He won, the evil of the universe was checked, and a universal victory became possible. In His profound sympathy with the need of man, and in His grief over the sins of the world, He was encountering the laws and the sanctions of the Divine government. Affliction came upon Him in consequence of the sins of men. Even if the term repentance be used of the expression in His person of the grief of God over human transgression, it was unquestionably a part of the universal government of moral agents,—*i.e.*, of the legislative order of the universe. There is no particular virtue in the use of the word punishment or penal infliction. It is not adopted *totidem verbis* by the inspired writers; but in a hundred ways the truth is taught, that in His sacrificial life and death, the consideration was supplied in virtue of which the Divine remission of sins is effected. It was the work of Him who, being one with God, and the brightness of the Father's glory, does not originate a schism in the God-head, or show Himself a God more compassionate or tender than the Eternal Father, but who gives utterance in the death He died to the righteousness and love that had from all eternity dwelt in the heart of God. Whatever else the death of Christ accomplished, it furnished the ground of the Divine forgiveness of human sins. Limiting our thought exclusively to the Divine action in the matter,—*i.e.*, to the mode of the operation of the Divinely-appointed laws assigned to moral beings and ruling their destiny,—there is sufficient reason to believe that the death of our Lord affected the entire constitution of the universe, and introduced a new and higher law into its administration,—*viz.*, the law of the living spirit. It became possible that though a man had sinned he

might yet repent of his sin ; that though he was alienated by wicked works, he might be reconciled to God ; that though he was under the curse of the broken law, he might be redeemed from the curse ; that though he had sown to the flesh, he might yet be born again, and live a new and divine life. No one of these great changes belonged to the domain of pure law, or were a part of the original constitution of things, or are revealed to us in nature. They are God's working in us ; they are the fruits and powers of the Spirit of life, which Jesus died and rose again, to confer upon the world.

This leads me to consider—

The forgiveness of sin as a human experience. I have already, when regarding it on its Divine side, endeavoured to prove that it is fundamentally the remission of all the consequences of sin, by Him who has assigned these consequences as a part of His holy administration of the universe. If this is an adequate statement of the subject, then *forgiveness* as a human experience must be the conscious removal of the known consequences of sin.

If sin itself be one of the first consequences of sin ; if sinful habit is the melancholy outcome of the commission of sin ; if pleasure and ease in sin, and obtuseness of moral perception, be part of the natural and legislative sanction of moral evil, then the pardon of sin,—not as an act of the Divine legislation and Fatherly grace, but as a positive effect wrought in the moral constitution of the sinner,—*must* involve the arrest of these consequences, whatever be the cause or ground in the Divine mind or government for so blessed a change of administration. The fact is, that in the very circumstance of his pardon, the pardoned sinner is delivered from these pernicious consequences of his past sins. The first and greatest thing done in the human soul, is the conference of a supernatural force to resist the downward and sinward tendencies of the

will. The law of the Spirit of life sets the man who is in Christ Jesus free from the law of sin and death. A new habit, divinely and mysteriously quickened by God's grace and Spirit, takes the place of the habit which the hitherto unchecked sin was originating. The bias which the sins of the life and the sinfulness of nature had given to the will is successfully resisted, and a bias against sin, a sense of loathing in its presence, a persuasion of the holiness of the Divine law and the sanctity of the will of God, takes the place in the soul of the former satisfaction in sin. It may be replied that in these words is described *regeneration* not pardon, and a change of state and of actual condition is confounded with a new relation to the justice of God. Let me then say, once more, I am speaking here of pardon or forgiveness of sins as a positive fact accomplished in the consciousness and experience of a sinner, not of the proceeding of the Almighty Ruler or Father; and from this standpoint regeneration and pardon do actually denote in part precisely the same fact. Over and above this, the two terms each connote many other and most fundamental ideas, but they coincide as a human experience. Thus regeneration on the one side involves a reference to the thoroughness and fundamental nature of the moral change that is wrought in a human soul. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Regeneration implies that it is a new birth—a birth from above, and that in this Divine process a new man is created in the image of God. The term also involves a reference to the agency by which the change is wrought, and to the means or the seed used by the Holy Spirit to educe this new life in humanity. "Pardon," on the other hand, connotes the removal of a variety of other consequences as well as the sinfulness of sin, and looks on into the future and back into the past; it is continually

associated in Holy Scripture with the reasons by which the Eternal Ruler and Father declares Himself to be governed; it points to a broken law rather than to a deformed and withered life, but in the first and most essential characteristic of pardon and regeneration as a *human experience*, the two terms include and involve the same thing. Thus the controversies as to the relative precedence of regeneration and pardon are superfluous. A man is not pardoned because he has been regenerated. A sinner is not forgiven because he has begun to live a new life. Justification is not, as Tridentine doctrine urges, the consequence and seal of sanctification, but it is in its very essence, *so soon as it becomes an experience of the sinner*, identical with it. The two terms in all the breadth of their meaning overlap each other; they manifest themselves in different lights; they are related to each other as *heat* and *motion* are in the physical universe, but they describe an identical *state* of mind, the same fact in the consciousness of a sinner.

Another consequence of sin which *pardon* must remove, is that hardening and alienation of heart from God, often called death in Holy Scripture.

If God pardons sin, and bestows a complete remission of its consequences, surely He has reconciled His child to Himself. He has revealed Himself not as less holy but as altogether lovely. A pardon which still left the laws of human nature to wreak their vengeance on the once sinning man, and drove him ever and anon into open hostility; which instituted no new and sacred relations with the Father; which left the old sores of the soul all running; which did not inspire confidence and love in the place of judicial distrust and moral death;—could not correspond in any way with the forgiveness, which we, in the spirit of the forgiving Father, exercise towards our brother. But, again, some one may reply, You are here

confounding faith, reconciliation with God, and repentance, with pardon. The argument may seem open to this charge, and the rejoinder must be paralled to that already used. These well-known terms simply describe the condition wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, when the infinite love of God, through its own sovereign energy, has dispelled the clouds that had concealed His face. "Faith" is the assent of the understanding, the repose of the heart, the submission of the will to the revelation of the living God. "Reconciliation" with God is only a narrower term, being itself included in the former, though pointing broadly to a previous estrangement. "Repentance" is the complete change of mind with reference to self and God, life and death, law and sin, and the consequences of sin. Is it not then equally true that when we confine the signification of *pardon* to the human experience,—*i.e.*; to what has actually taken place in the soul when God has pardoned it,—we are describing that which often passes under other names, and these none other than *faith, repentance, reconciliation*? These phrases are not by any means of equal signification, the terms have wider meanings in other connections, and have their own analysis; but when we use the terms *faith in God, reconciliation with God, repentance towards God*, we are simply speaking of the *state* of pardon, the state of a man's soul when he is set free from the consequences of sin. Much of the controversy as to the relation of faith to regeneration, faith to justification, faith to the Holy Spirit's working; many of the disputes as to whether faith is a condition or a consequence of justification, and whether it conditionates, precedes, or follows the gift of eternal life, become severally simplified when we analyze our own consciousness of what God has wrought in us, when He for the sake of His beloved Son forgives our sin. "We are saved by grace, through faith," and that salvation through

faith is "the gift of God;" "He that believeth on the Son hath life, he that believeth not is condemned already."*

A third consequence of sin which pardon must remit is punishment.

There are penal consequences of sin. There is punishment in this life and also in the world to come. Suffering is inflicted by the righteousness of God. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness

* There can be no serious question that the main, if not the exclusive use of the word *δικαιῶν* in the New Testament, is a forensic one, that it signifies "to declare just," to "acquit," to "reckon as righteous," in opposition to the idea of "condemn." The word does not mean to "make just," or to "infuse righteousness." If the idea of justification be restricted to what takes place in the mind and will of God, we are limited in that region of contemplation to forensic notions, the ground and cause of this acquittal being the righteousness of the God-man, but so soon as we transfer our regards from the judgment-seat of God to the human spirit, affected by the justification, and ask what change has taken place there, the first sign, the first element, of that acquittal unquestionably is the deliverance from sin. The change of condition and relation to the government of God, can only be *known* in the energies of a new and Godgiven life. A man is not justified because he is already sanctified, nor because of any "merit of congruity," but because Christ died and rose again. Still his justification as a fact of his experience is *pro-tanto* the commencement of his sanctification. The confusion of justification with sanctification, or the inclusion of sanctification in justification, is the perpetual charge brought by the Reformed Theologians against the Catholic doctors, against the Tridentine decrees, and even against Augustine himself. Augustine announced their relation to each other thus, in his *Opus imperfectum Contra Julianum*, II., clxv :—"God justifies the ungodly, not only by remitting the sins he commits, but also by giving him inward love, which causes him to depart from evil, and makes him holy through the Spirit." If by justification be meant the remission of judicial suffering merely, if all that the disputants meant was the removal of the forensic consequences of sin, the declaration of the Judge as to the new relation sustained by an ungodly man to the law and government of the universe, then it became imperative on the Reformed Theologians to show that the inherent righteousness given by the Holy Spirit to the regenerated and justified man, was insufficient for the purpose, that still less could the spontaneous obedience of a condemned man expiate his past offences or deliver him from the curse. "Justification" in that sense ran the risk of being regarded as the consequence and result of sanctification, and the confusion once made was likely to lead to the substitution of the Holy Spirit's agency for the atoning work of Christ. This peril the Reformers warded off with all the force of their strong position and heaviest artillery. Once admit that sanctification is the real basis of judicial freedom from the curse of the law, whether through the power of the Spirit, or because of the merits of the Saviour's death, and the door is opened for the priest and the Church to define the limits and nature of sanctification. If, however, by *justification* be meant a full forgiveness, the gracious remission of *all* the consequences of actual and original sin, then regeneration and sanctification must necessarily be included in it. This is probably the explanation of the supposed confusion of the terms by Augustine. Bellarmine, *De Justificatione*, L. II. cap. viii., has enumerated the passages. Davenant, *De justitia*, cap. xxv., has replied upon each quotation, and so far successfully as to show that when Augustine, as in *Tom VI. De Heresibus*, cap. lxxxviii., speaks of the grace of God by which we are *justified*, as that "whereby we are brought from the power of darkness, to believe in Christ, and are translated into His kingdom; and whereby love is shed abroad in our hearts," he sometimes means by it "the free forgiveness of sin and acceptance to life eternal, by and through the obedience of the Mediator," but at other times "the act of God infusing and implanting in us habitual grace or inherent righteousness."

Baxter in his *Life of Faith* (Works, vol. xii. chap. vii.), and viii. expresses the relation in a great variety of forms, as, e.g.,—"Sanctification and justification are all one, that is, that God having pardoned us *de jure*, doth pardon us executively by giving us His forfeited Spirit and grace, and by all the communion which we have after with Him, and the comfort which we have from Him."

of men. This suffering is the testimony of God in the sensibility of his creatures to the holiness of His nature and government. When we forgive transgressions against ourselves, we, so far as we are competent to do so, remit the infliction of the suffering which it was in our power to impose. If God remit the sins which He has condemned, He foregoes the punishment. The experience of the forgiven man is immunity from threatened doom. We are often told that Divine grace takes away the disposition and bias to sin, and therefore removes all its consequences ; and seeing that he who is born of God cannot commit sin, therefore he is not henceforth exposed to the punishment of sin. Such a Gospel as this does not meet the difficulties of the case, nor silence the condemnation of conscience ; for the following reasons :—

(1.) The man who has been awakened, and brought to see the light of God's countenance, and the awful sanctities of His law, looks into his past life and discerns actions and dispositions that put him beyond the protection of that law ; he remembers acts of overt rebellion that merited death ; he knows that he has fired the train of causative energies, that are, by the ordinances of nature, rushing on to consume him. The analogy of nature and of human tribunals shows him that obedience for the future will not free him from the consequences of past disobedience. A murderer or a traitor may be brought into a state of moral accord with the law of his country, and be so revolutionized by the circumstances of his detection, and the solemn aspects of law and judgment, that if set at liberty he would never again knowingly violate the laws of his country ; but he does not by these means free himself from the liability to punishment. It is still right that he should suffer. If he be *forgiven* by the sovereign, that suffering which is his due is remitted, but it is an act of sovereign grace, of royal clemency

especially administered to him. So, the forgiveness of the royal Father's heart is the analogous treatment of the transgressor against His legislation. Unless the Gospel is an amnesty for the past, it leaves the soul under the dark cloud of condemnation and doom.

(2.) Such an explanation of the remission of punishment as makes it solely due to the altered relations of the soul with God and to its freedom from sin, makes the consciousness of such immunity to be entirely dependent on the realization of *perfect* conformity with the Divine will and holy order of the universe. Now, here the experience of the greatest saints, as well as of multitudes of believers in God, is entirely opposed to such a ground of confidence. The holier a man is, the more he becomes alive to his departure in thought, word and deed, from the Divine ideal. David, Asaph, Job, Paul, John, James, Augustine, Bernard, Bunyan, and all the noblest and the best of the human race join in the confession, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, we make Him a liar; and if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." The memories of evil left in the regenerated soul are still so vivid, that the idea of being freed from the punishment, in virtue of being free from sin, would plunge the saints of God into despair. It is easy to say, even to the holiest man, "Thou must be content to bear all the suffering which thy past sins entail upon thee, in time and eternity." The curse of the broken law was too heavy a burden for the shoulders of Paul. He grovelled on the earth beneath it, and felt that he was "wretched." The deliverance he sought and found, was not that he was to bear to the bitter end this body of death, but that there was "no condemnation to those who were in Christ Jesus, who walked not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The law of the spirit of life in Christ had set him free from the law of sin and death.

The question may be asked by others, How does this remission of punishment accord with the facts of the case? Is not sin continuously punished in the righteous as well as the unrighteous. A drunkard, a licentious, ambitious or covetous man has been renewed in his inner life, he is no longer opposed to God's law. He has begun to love God, and to glorify Him in his body and spirit. He is charitable, self-restraining, gentle, but still he has to suffer from the seeds of disease implanted in his constitution. He has sown to the flesh, and corruption will be the harvest which he will still have to reap; he has made deadly enemies, who will laugh at his repentance, and take no heed of his altered disposition. Must he not bear the fruits of his sin, in suffering to his life's end? Are not these punishments inflicted by God, for sins which have been fully pardoned? If there are these unmistakeable signs of the inviolable laws of the Most High, what hope is there that he shall not suffer on, and suffer for ever, the consequences of sins which have been forgiven? This is doubtless a very difficult question to answer, and one that cannot be readily brought into harmony with scientific and theological formulæ. It is a patent fact, which may seem to run counter to the idea of the full redemption that is in Christ Jesus. We must admit the fact of penal suffering, that continually follows the commission of sins, even though those sins themselves are pardoned by God, and hated by the pardoned sinner; and we must admit, that a pardoned and sanctified man may suffer great agony of body and mind in consequence of the sins of others, as well as of the sins of his own youth and heedlessness, and that he may even grieve over them for ever. Did Peter ever cease to suffer mental agony because he had denied his Master? We admit that there is suffering in the flesh and in the spirit that is compatible with the pardon of sin and the remission of punishment.

The secular punishment has changed its character in the act of pardon and in the consciousness of forgiveness. It is this change of administration which is due to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are two elements in every penal infliction, on the one hand there is the exhibition of the rightness of the link which connects sin and suffering. This is evident in the demands of moral order, and in the safety thus extended to the law itself. These are universal and binding, save where, by the direct and gracious interference of the Lawgiver, they are for adequate reasons arrested or suspended. The end of *this* element in the punishment is God Himself ; but on the other hand, there are all the moral and disciplinary functions of penal suffering, which, like pain in the physical system, are parts of a beneficent arrangement for the preservation of life. The end of these elements in the punishment of sin, is the sanctification of the sinner, and these, when seen to be the action of a Father's love, lose all their curse, and are transmuted into blessing. When the punishment that falls on us is felt to be the loving discipline of a Father's hand, the sting is taken away from it ; then we can glory in infirmities, distresses, and afflictions, and believe that nothing can separate us from His love. That which the suffering of Christ has effected for us is the exhaustion of the curse. The claims of law are satisfied in His infinite sorrow and unique sacrifice. The judicial sentence was pronounced on all sins, when God condemned sin in His flesh. The law is safe, the moral order of the universe is undisturbed, the sanctions of virtue are maintained, and in the pardon of sin, in the practical removal from the transgressor himself of the moral and judicial consequences of human transgressions, the great change is wrought in the soul of man by which the punishments that yet encumber his flesh and spirit become disciplinary, excite no rebellion, provoke no

antagonism, but actually draw him nearer to the heart and will of the Holy God. The ultimate issue of this great act of clemency will be the entire sanctification of the forgiven spirit, and the acceptance with joy and faith of everything that shall bring the whole man into perfect accord with the Divine will.

We have now to consider the steps which are to be taken by man to secure this Divine result.

Regeneration and justification are seen to stand in the closest relations to one another. The two terms represent an identical experience of the man who is saved, and they lead up his adoring gratitude to the special operations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But how is the great deed to be done, and how is the pardoned sinner to know that it is accomplished? There are aspects in which this same condition of mind can be viewed strictly on the side of personal experience and conscious self-responsibility. Faith, repentance, the spirit of forgiveness, confession of sin, are all treated as the human antecedents of the forgiveness and remission of sins, and though they are the gift and grace of God, they are urged upon the sinner's conscience as his bounden duty.

Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, acquiescence in His claims as the sufficient revelation of the Father, the adequate expression of the righteousness and love of God, the Giver of eternal life, and the Lord and Master of the soul, is *per se* the sign and proof that God has wrought within Him. The antecedents of faith, its gradations and growth in accordance with the laws of human nature and the laws of the Spirit of life, are themselves expressions of the working of the Eternal Spirit. Still, the act of faith is consciously a man's own act; it takes place in the region of conscious self. Faith is life,—life in voluntary activity. It is set forth as duty. The demand for faith makes a direct appeal to the conscience. God “com-

mands" man to repent and believe. The reasons for faith are addressed to the rational nature of man, and they do not violate or coerce his moral nature. It is in the highest degree reasonable and right to have faith in God, to accept the testimony that God has given concerning His Son. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The righteousness of God is revealed to faith, or to those who exercise faith. It is through faith in the blood of Christ that the righteousness of God is declared in the remission of sins that are past. Faith is the initial form of the entire grace of salvation, so far as that grace is seen in the voluntary surrender of the soul to the claims of God. This state of faith was disturbed at the fall, but has been re instituted by the Holy Spirit through the mediation, the death, the glorification of the Son of God. Faith in the incarnation breaks the spell of sin; faith in the cross of Christ lifts the doom of sin; faith in the active and passive righteousness of Christ, appropriates and realizes a full salvation. The voluntary acceptance of this exhibition of the real character of God, the repose of the affections in a mercy which is in itself a condemnation of sin, the acquiescence of the will in the sacrificial death of Christ as the ground revealed in the administration of Divine government for the conference upon man of the eternal life, is salvation. Such an act of voluntary, heartfelt, rational surrender to God is possible, because "the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin;" because the Lamb has been slain from the beginning, because "the Lamb is in the midst of the throne." Still, the act is man's own conscious act, for the performance of which he is responsible to God.

Repentance is most explicitly stated (Acts v. 31) to be a gift of God, a dispensation of the exalted Christ from the throne of His glory, one of the fruits and conse-

quences of the descent of the Holy Spirit. Conversion to God is but the human side of what is done when a new heart and right spirit are created within a man. A new estimate of sin, a new disposition towards God, a new judgment about self, involving it may be bitter self-reproach, anguish and tears, are doubtless the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul. The *μετάνοια*, the complete change of mind with reference to God Himself, includes faith, but it involves the judgment which the enlightened man will pronounce upon his own past life, and upon the damaged condition of his own nature. But reason, conscience, and revelation command man to repent. The call for repentance is sustained not only by its inherent reasonableness, but by the agonies of Calvary, and by the certainties of future judgment. (Acts xvii. 30.)

Another condition of forgiveness, is *the spirit of forgiveness*. Without it, comprehension of the righteousness or love of God is simply impossible. The Spirit of forgiveness is the Spirit of the blessed God given to His child. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* The reason is most obvious, it is at once clear to the conscience that the unforgiving man is unforgiven. The act of forgiveness is the reception from the Divine Spirit of an indispensable element in the grace of forgiveness.

The *confession* of sin against a brother is a reasonable condition of receiving a brother's forgiveness. The confession of sin to God is of the essence of repentance and faith, and thus does not interfere with the grand truth that a man is justified by faith only. It is a sign that momentous spiritual changes are going on in a man when he can bring his sin into the presence of the Holy God, and see it in the light of perfect law and perfect sacrifice. The effort to do so tears up the roots of evil

* See also Matt. xviii. 35; Eph. iv. 31; Matt. vi. 14, 15; Mark xi. 25, 26.

desire, and crucifies the world with its affections. It is the sublime peculiarity of Christianity, that a sinner can take his sins to God and find mercy, even amid the burning light of that most Holy Presence. More than this, one man may help another to make this confession, to see himself and judge of himself more accurately than he would do, in the isolation and awfulness of his own repentance. The danger of self-deceit and self-flattery is great. The experience of the devout and impartial Christian who knows something of human nature, and has realized the full assurance of faith, may be found of the greatest avail in the struggle of the soul heavenwards. All Churches and all Christians admit this great advantage. The free Churches of England, as associations of those who have mutual confidence in one another's spiritual life, develop this vital principle of the communion of saints to a fuller extent, perhaps, than those which are limited by what are called Catholic traditions and obedience. They do, however, repudiate as lamentable and perilous to souls the elaborate development which this simple principle has received in the so-called sacrament of "confession," "penance," and "absolution." The High Church party in many of their publications* glory in the fact that in the "offices" of the Church of England, in the "Visitation of the Sick," in the "Order for Morning and Evening Prayer," and in the Communion Service, as well as the Ordination Services, the theory is maintained and the practice enjoined of confession to the priest, and the consequent infliction of penance or pronouncement of absolution and Divine forgiveness of sins upon the penitent. Several of these services do unquestionably sustain the sacerdotal character of the Christian ministry. It is assumed that

* Tracts for the Day, edited by Rev. Orby Shipley, *Sacraments*; Palmer's *Treatise on the Church*, part iv. chap. xvi.; *The Priest's Prayer-Book*, edited by Rev. Dr. Littledale and Rev. J. E. Vaux.

the bishop confers upon the priest the powers which Christ conferred upon His Apostles, and from the time that the said functionary shall have uttered the mystic words, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained," the priest thus ordained has the identical power which our Lord conferred when He breathed on the eleven and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c. It is argued that the priestly character thus communicated, actually qualifies a man sacramentally to accept the confessions, and judge of the repentance and faith of penitents. This is a difficult assumption, because it supposes that an official position, and a sacramental act, has not only conferred certain mystical prerogatives which, from the impossibility of analyzing or testing them, can with difficulty be repudiated, but has also conferred very peculiar mental power and moral penetration.

This claim appears to us to be entirely without support in Scripture or primitive antiquity, and to be the mere echo of the high-sounding pretensions of the mediæval priest. It is notorious that certain sins of faithlessness, impurity, and treachery committed by immature Christians in the ages of persecution, were sins against the Christian society, as well as against the living God. The Church of Corinth was directed by St. Paul to expel from its fellowship an incestuous person, and afterwards, on his profession of deep penitence, to forgive him the wrong he had done against the honour and sanctity of the Christian profession, and to admit him once more to the society of believers. Congregational Churches make this solemn advice and injunction of St. Paul, the statute and precedent of their action in similar cases. During the severe persecutions of Christians by the Roman power, many were not strong enough to risk their life for Christ, and offered sacrifice or incense to the gods or to the images of the

Emperor. There were other cases of gross scandal, which also incurred exclusion from the community, and before such persons could be permitted to return to the privileges of the Church, they were required to vindicate by hearty repentance and true faith their evangelical title to pardon. The presbyter or bishop of the Church then proceeded to perform the act of readmission to the Church, not by rebaptism, but by *χειροθεσία*, the laying on of hands and the pronouncement of some formula of absolution.* This formidable power was a usurpation on the part of the hierarchy of the functions of the Church itself, and was rapidly developed into a system, which rendered confession to the priest, penance, and absolution, a part of the normal career of the Divine life. The growth of sacerdotal profession favoured this claim of the priesthood, and with other things tended to the origination along the lines of a certain ecclesiastical genealogy of the theory of Apostolic succession. One reply which our modern sacerdotalists give to their opponents degenerates into an *argumentum ad hominem*. They say† the power conferred upon the Apostolically-ordained priest is unquestionably very great, and the abuse of such power is possible, but the power involved in preaching or proclaiming the gospel of repentance is equally great, and more liable to abuse. There is, however, this difference between the two cases, that the confessor adds to the grave responsibility of preaching what he believes to be the way of salvation, the still graver onus of having acquired

* For some centuries this power of absolution was confined to the bishop, and not until it became impossible for him to exercise it, was the formidable injunction contained in the ordinal, or any form of absolution, used by the priest, which was other than precatory. The treatment of the *lapsi* fills one of the most interesting pages of Ecclesiastical History. It is tolerably clear that Cyprian altered his views on the remissibility of post baptismal sins, when the bitter experiences of the Decian persecution forced the necessities and sorrows of the *lapsi* upon his attention. His refusal to accept the certificates of peace (*libellos pacis*), which were furnished to the *lapsi* by Lucianus (*Sermo de lapsis*), contrast with the bitterness of his denunciation of Novatus for a similar severity; but the whole controversy shows how far the principle of ministerial absolution had been carried by those haughty Churchmen.—See Suicer's *Thesaurus* sub voce, *χειροθεσία*; Neander's *General Church History*, vol. i. 319-321.

† Tracts for the Day: Sacraments.

in his ordination a mental and moral fitness to penetrate the windings of a fellow-sinner's experience, and to administer or withhold the grace of God. He does, moreover, limit this strange and perilous prerogative to a section of Christendom, who hold certain notions as to the correct form of Church government. This is not the place to discuss the question of Apostolical succession as limited to certain "episcopally-officered communities;" it is, however, necessary to point out that the claim of the Anglican and Roman Priest to "remit and retain sins," turns on the following assumptions, which may be the alphabet of "Catholic tradition," but which are utterly repudiated by thousands of men in the Anglican Church, and by all Nonconforming communities:—

(a) That the Apostles of Christ possessed a function or power of dealing with individual souls, or standing between their penitence and pardon. We can discover no proof that St. Paul, or St. Peter, or St. John ever dared thus to absolve a sinner from his sin against God, in virtue of any special commission to remit or retain sins against the community. The repeated arguments of Paul show that forgiveness was entirely dependent on the will of the Father reconciling the world to Himself by Jesus Christ. There is ample explanation of the so-called power of the keys, without making an assumption that is not confirmed by the example or writing of the Apostles.

(b) Supposing that the Apostles, in virtue of their immediate relation with our blessed Lord and of His special commission, had the power of forgiving and absolving sinners, the "succession" presupposes that they had the further power to confer upon official successors this sublime function, and to delegate to uninspired men by sacramental rite, the mental faculties as well as the spiritual knowledge, which would qualify them for this mystical and responsible work. If any colour can be found for the

supposition that the Apostles themselves interpreted the Lord's commission to mean the possession by themselves of some authority equivalent to that of Him who said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," there does not appear in the New Testament annals, any proof that they conferred this power on others. The Evangelist Philip was unable to confer upon the Samaritans the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. The elders of the Church of Ephesus were bidden to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them bishops, to feed the Church and to support the weak, but not a word is said of the absolution of their sins. Neither does it appear that Mark, Timothy, Titus, Silas, or Luke exercised this power, closely as they were related to the great Apostle. Archippus and Epaphras are never enjoined to exercise any such sacerdotal rite ; nor does the earliest writing of the so-called Apostolic Fathers reveal the presence of any such portentous claims. It is not long before traces are found in the earliest patristic Divinity, of belief in the "succession" of bishops, and the growth of the idea of a Divine Society, sins against which were punished or pardoned by its officers ; but it is curious to see how slowly any priestly functions were attributed to the ministry. Here, the New Testament is significantly silent.

(c) However, if it be granted that the earliest associates of the Apostles began to absolve penitents from the curse of sin, a third and necessary supposition is, that these first successors of the Apostles not only handed down to their followers the Apostles' doctrine and spirit, but that they delegated this derived faculty to representatives who, age after age, have exercised the same discrimination in the choice of the subjects of this Divine gift, and have conferred a right and power to do this very thing, and to deal with souls and sins as none can do,

who are not related to this episcopally-ordered genealogical tree.

To some of us this is so absolutely inconceivable and irrational, that the simple statement of it becomes its own confutation. Even if the episcopal genealogy was perfect ; if no schism had ever disturbed the harmony of the episcopal order ; if no Montanist, Melitian, Donatist, Monophysite, or semi-Arian Bishop had ever exercised his unhallowed functions, or violated the sanctity of the sacred Brahmanical thread, or injected the poison of his heresy into the sacramental order ; if no Lollard, or Hussite, or Lutheran, or Calvinist, had ever broken the allegiance of Rome ; if there had never been an anti-Pope, or a rival bishop, in the entire history of Christendom ; if at this moment all Christians formed one undivided organization that had never shown the least disposition to schism or divarication, even then the claim would be to our minds radically vitiated by the twofold consideration : that it is contrary to all psychological laws that the necessary power to read the heart should have accompanied the authority to preach the Gospel ; and by the sublime independence in which the pardoned soul stands of any such help when it once understands the Priesthood of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost.

(*d*) Priests of the Anglican communion have, however, to make a further assumption, which is still more difficult to concede : it is that the present Church of England is such a department or member of the Church Catholic that whether the Eastern or the Roman Church concede such a claim or not, and that although one-half of her own clergy treat it with sceptical indifference, yet any of these priests ordained—it may be by an Evangelical, Erastian, Rationalistic, or Radical bishop, appointed in the teeth of his own Chapter, by a Prime Minister, who may be the creature of a House of

Commons—has in virtue of that episcopal ordination the right and the power to do what it is extremely doubtful whether an Apostle charged with the miraculous energies of Pentecost would have dared to do. The supposition is incomplete, unless the long succession of holy confessors and martyrs, the pastors and elders of tens of thousands of Christian Churches throughout the world, who entertain no such ideas of the sanctity of episcopal order or succession, are absolutely inhibited and incompetent to do what the young curate of yesterday is sacramentally empowered to accomplish in dealing with the fundamental essence of the Gospel, and its practical application in any particular case.

The “absolution” pronounced by the priest in the Morning and Evening Services of the Church of England may be interpreted, with perfect candour, as the declaration by the ministry of the Church, of their power and commandment to pronounce to God’s people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins ; but this power, or commandment, is conferred upon, and is exercised by all who know what the Gospel of God is. Such cannot but make the declaration of the principle on which God does pardon. All the priests in the world cannot render this more true by their simultaneous utterance of it, any more than all the *savans* in the world can add one element of truth or reality to the axioms of mathematics by any authoritative utterance of them. In the “Holy Communion” Service there is a form of absolution, which by its tone, and by the absence of any explanatory or justificatory clause, suggests the exercise of a right to utter some of the great truths and promises of the new dispensation, with a cogency and personal application which are the peculiar function of some delegate of heaven. Here again, unless it is pre-supposed that by previous confession every communicant has obtained his

right to be present on the occasion, and that the priest of his own knowledge, or on the certificate of some confessor, is making a special application of these promises to the members of his flock, every person thus addressed must become, in fact, his own priest, and pronounce his own absolution. The form of this is taken from the Missals of Sarum, York, and Hereford, with the addition of the invocation, "Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who of His great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him;" and the introduction of these words throws the responsibility upon the communicants to discover whether their repentance is "hearty" and their faith "true."*

It is far otherwise with the "Order for the Visitation of the Sick," where the priest is guided to make examination into the faith of the sick person to receive the confession of his sins, "If he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter," and then follows this most explicit declaration, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him, of His great mercy forgive thee thine offences; and by His authority committed unto me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." The form of this "absolution" follows closely in the spirit of that which had been in use throughout the Churches of the West; it is as old as the sacramentary of Gelasius, 490; † it reveals clearly the

* *Directorium Anglicanum*, p. 55, says that "The priest should always pronounce the absolution without the use of the book," giving the idea that the man is the living organ of the truth, that "truth Divine comes mended," we suppose, "from his lips."

† *Palmer's Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. ii. pp. 229-230, where the whole service is compared with its Roman original. The effort is made by some writers (see Rev. Hobart Seymour on the Confessional; Dr. Blakeney on the Book of Common Prayer, &c.; Dean Boyd on Confession, Absolution, &c.) to show that the former portion of the sentence is a prayer to Christ for forgiveness of offences done against Him, and that the declaratory absolution that follows has reference to the sins against the Church, with which the sick or dying man is thus brought into fellowship. The dying man, to make this discrimination, must have keener perception of differences than is common to most scholars.

sacerdotal basis which Anglican Catholics can discover for their profession, in the structure of the Book of Common Prayer, and it assists them to carry its spirit back into the other services, where the indicative form retires into the background, and the personal character of both priest and sinner is lost in the generality of the utterance.

The claim of the priesthood, which has prevailed throughout episcopally-governed Christendom for so many centuries, must not be dismissed as a valueless and perilous assumption. It does cover a great truth and a deep reality, viz., that there is life-giving power and holy contagion in the mutual communication of a common hope, in the united exercise of solemn faith and prayer. One sinner can help another to believe and to repent. The confident expression of Christian hope and faith does kindle human hearts and bring them into holy fellowship. The Spirit of God does work with human affections and in the interchanges of religious experience. Many a Roman priest has gained as much as he has imparted in the confessional. The reality of Christ's love has flashed back from the soul of the believing penitent, and lighted up his own with new love and higher trust. The solemn utterance of the law of Christ, and of the power of His cleansing blood, has often lifted the burden from the conscience and saved the souls of men ; but this has happened millions of times, when no sacerdotal claim has been preferred, in the pastorate of every godly minister, in the Sunday-school class, on a thousand deathbeds, on battle-fields, in the mission station, in wretched homes and hearts, which have been reached by Christian faithfulness and love.

We are told by our Anglican brethren that beyond the circle of sacerdotal absolution, we can have no certainty of salvation, that apart from the assurance of the priest,

there is no Christ but the creation of our own subjective fancies, no objective reality in the approach of our spirits to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. But if our argument throughout this Essay be sound, assurance of faith is but the consciousness of our own faith and of our reconciliation with God. It is the absolution which the conscience of every believer pronounces upon himself when he takes hold of Christ, when he is "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ."

The sublime discovery that sin is abnormal and hateful, that God is righteous and merciful, the gush of filial emotion to the Father, the interchanges of affection between the soul and God, the subsidence of mystery in the full sunlight of God's smile, the life and peace of the spiritual mind are the absolution that the soul of man craves. The official intervention of human agency between faith and repentance and pardon, in its fullest and deepest sense, is futile. These graces are correlated to each other, and are all administered to the soul by the Holy Spirit. "If the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." This blessed change, this voluntary surrender to the will of God, is effected in virtue of the mediatorial government of the universe, of the blood which cleanses from all sin, of the Spirit which regenerates the corrupted nature, of the grace which pardons and accepts the broken heart. If a sinner turn to God in Christ with hearty penitence and true faith, HE IS ABSOLVED, HE IS SAVED; and the whole constitution of the Kingdom of God is pledged to the remission of all his sins. The entire revelation of God, and the whole experience of the Church, pronounce his absolution. The ministry of the Gospel is continually employed in uttering this fact. The power to proclaim it, is the heritage of every man who,

being reconciled to God, knows that he is so, and knows the reason why. Priesthoods have arrogated the right to make known to individuals and to the world at large great truths ; but when the truth is known no sacerdotal power can monopolize it. An Œcumenical Council of Bishops cannot add one iota of conviction to a man who is reconciled to God, and who hath the witness in himself. The assurance of salvation is a fact of religious experience, and all the priesthoods are powerless to arrest it, to frustrate it, or even to supply its necessary conditions.

THE
DOCTRINE OF THE REAL PRESENCE
AND OF
THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY
R. W. DALE, M.A.

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TOWARDS the close of the ninth century Charles the Bold, not yet invested with the imperial purple, being troubled that the faith of his subjects should be imperilled by controversies on the Eucharist, requested several theologians, famous for their sanctity and learning, to define for himself and his people the ancient Catholic doctrine touching that Sacrament. It was in response to this appeal that Ratramnus wrote his celebrated treatise, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini*. He tells Charles that nothing "can be more worthy of a prince than to take care that he himself is Catholic in his judgment concerning the mysteries of Him, who hath deigned to commit to him his kingly throne, and to endure not that his subjects should think diversely concerning the Body of Christ, in the which it is certain that the whole sum of Christian redemption doth consist."

Just a thousand years have passed away, and England is agitated by conflicting opinions concerning the same mystery; but the process of settlement is changed. Royal zeal for the faith does not in these days ask for

the opinions of theologians ; hostile theologians appear before royal councils, and plead hard for a favourable verdict. If the creed of the Church is to be determined by authority, the old way may appear to some more reasonable than the new. For the king to ask a theologian to write a treatise is a more obvious method of arriving at the truth than for the Church to ask the Privy Council to pronounce judgment.

It is obvious, however, that even the more modest form of royal interference with ecclesiastical and theological controversies is not quite free from peril. With the very best intentions the king may, through ignorance, consult theologians infected with heresy, and so be led astray. This, according to Bellarmine, was the ill-fortune of Charles. The great Romish controversialist, enumerating the dark succession of those who have denied the true faith concerning the Eucharist, begins with the followers of Simon Magus and Menander ; then, passing over seven centuries, he names Scotus : "Non ille Doctor subtilis sed alius antiquior, qui tempore, Caroli magni circa annum Domini, DCCC., scripsit." * "The third was Bertramus, in the time of Charles the Fat, about the year 886, whose book is still in existence. He again raised the controversy whether that same Body of Christ which was born of the Virgin Mary is present in the Eucharist. Paschasius, Abbot of Corbie, who flourished at that period, refuted this error with great learning." *

This, however, is not quite a fair statement of the origin of the dispute. The great Eucharistic controversy

* *De Sac. Euch.*, L. I. cap. i. Later scholars have arrived at the conclusion that the treatise attributed by Bellarmine to the heterodox Scotus, and which was supposed to be lost, is really the treatise which was written by Ratramnus.

† *Ibid.* Bellarmine seems to be inaccurate again in placing the treatise of Bertramus—properly Ratramnus—so late. He appears to have written, as has been said above, not under the reign of Charles the Fat, but under the reign of Charles the Bold ; not in 886, but in 870.

in the Western Church, which commenced a little after the middle of the ninth century, was originated not by Ratramnus, but by Paschasius. It was Paschasius who gave the great impulse to that theological movement which culminated three centuries and a half later in the establishment of the doctrine of Transubstantiation as the creed of Western Christendom. The strength and definiteness of his language in affirming that the visible Elements cease to be Bread and Wine after consecration,* startled the common people, and provoked sharp rejoinders from eminent theologians. He was condemned strongly by Rabanus Maurus, the illustrious Archbishop of Mayence. Frudegard, a monk, who at first received the new doctrine, was convinced that it was erroneous by the writings of Augustine, and, in a treatise on the controversy, quoted against Paschasius the great doctor of the African Church.

But Ratramnus was his chief opponent. While Paschasius Radbertus was "the first," according to Bellarmine, "who wrote copiously and systematically on the truth of the Lord's Body and Blood in the Eucharist," Ratramnus stands conspicuous among the earliest protesters against the most serious of all the corruptions of the simplicity of the Apostolic faith. These two stand at the head of two unbroken lines of hostile theologians, who for a thousand years have divided the mind of the Christian nations of Western Europe. Never for any considerable period has the great controversy ceased since they began it. In generation after generation, in century after century, the fierce feuds which they kindled have broken out afresh. Through protracted and bloody wars, and through prosperous years of peace,—while

* "Omnia quæcumque voluit Dominus fecit in cælo et in terra, et quia voluit licet figura panis et vini hic sit tamen omnino nihil aliud quam caro Christi et sanguis post consecrationem credenda sunt."—De Corp. et Sang. Dom., cap. i. Quoted by Bellarmine, De Sac. Euch., L. II. cap. xxiv.

famous dynasties have been achieving glory and sinking into shame,—while nations, then hardly known, have been struggling out of barbarism into the foremost ranks of greatness and power, and while the splendour of illustrious kingdoms and commonwealths has been fading away,—while new literatures, new sciences, new systems of philosophy, new types of civilization have been gradually taking possession of the world,—that old controversy, which a thousand years ago Charles the Bold asked Ratramnus to settle for him, has kept alive, has continued to excite, to divide, to infuriate mankind, and at this moment it seems likely to agitate Christendom for many ages to come.

The value of the treatise of Ratramnus it is not easy to exaggerate; and those passages, which to an ordinary Protestant reader are most perplexing, are of special importance. Again and again he uses language which appears to favour a theory hardly to be distinguished from the theory of the Council of Lateran and the Council of Trent, language identical with that which is constantly quoted from the Fathers in support of the doctrine of Transubstantiation; but there are formal statements and striking lines of argument which demonstrate that in his time such language might be used by a writer who regarded that doctrine as a flagrant heresy, and in the very act of controverting it. He says that :—

“The Bread which is offered, though taken^r from the fruits of the earth, is by consecration changed into Christ's Body; and the Wine, though it hath flowed from the vine, yet by the consecration in the Divine mystery is made the Blood of Christ, not indeed visibly, but as this doctor (St. Isidore) saith, by the invisible operation of the Spirit of God.”*

* Parag. 42. The quotations are made from the translation of the treatise appended to *The True Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist*, by the Rev. J. Taylor, M.A.; London, 1855.

This might be appealed to as an acknowledgment of a supernatural change of the substance of the elements while the sensible accidents remain unchanged.

But later in the treatise he says :—

“ It is further to be considered that in that Bread, not the Body of Christ alone is figured, but also that of the people who believe in Him. Wherefore it is made of many grains of corn, as the body of faithful people is made up of many that believe through the Word of Christ. For which reason, as that Bread is taken to be the Body of Christ in a mystery, so likewise are the members of the people that believe in Christ signified in a mystery. And as that Bread is called the Body of believers not corporally but spiritually, so also we must understand the Body of Christ not corporally but spiritually.” *

The allusion is obviously to 1 Cor. x. 17 (“ We being many are one loaf”), and Ratramnus maintains that if the consecrated Loaf is the Body of Christ, it is also, and in the same sense, the Church of Christ.

He is so strongly impressed with the force of this argument that he is unwilling to dismiss it, and in the next paragraph he repeats it in another form :—

“ So, too, with the Wine, which is called the Blood of Christ, water is ordered to be mixed, nor is the one allowed to be offered without the other ; because as the head cannot be without the body, nor the body without the head, so neither can the people be without Christ, nor Christ without the people. Moreover, the water in that [part of the] Sacrament beareth the image of the people. *If, therefore, that Wine, when consecrated by the office of the minister, is corporally changed into the Blood of Christ, the water also which is mixed with it, must necessarily be corporally changed into the blood of the faithful people.* For where the consecration is one, there followeth also one operation ; and where the cause is the same, the mystery which followeth is the same also. But we see no change made in the water as to bodily substance, and, therefore, there is no change in the Wine. Whatever in the water signifieth the people of Christ, is taken spiritually ; whatever, therefore, in the Wine representeth the Blood of Christ, must be taken spiritually too.” †

He recognizes no distinction between the manner in which baptism originates the Divine life in the soul and the manner in which the Eucharist sustains it ; there

* The True Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, pp. 73, 74.

† Ibid, p. 75.

is no substantial change in the water of the font, nor is there any substantial change in the Elements of the Supper. He argues that, according to St. Paul, the Jews in the desert received the Body and the Blood of Christ in the manna and in the water that came from the Rock, just as we receive the Body and the Blood of Christ in the Bread and the Wine.

The substance of the Elements, he teaches, is unchanged by consecration. They were Bread and Wine before, they remain Bread and Wine still. And yet they are the Body of Christ. How is this? He replies that we are not to believe that "two things co-exist, diverse between themselves, namely, Body and Spirit;" referring to what he had said about "the spiritual Body and the spiritual Blood of Christ" existing "under the veil of corporeal Bread and Wine":—

"But *one and the same thing* hath in one respect the nature of Bread and Wine, in another is the Body and Blood of Christ. As far as they are corporally handled, they are in their nature corporeal creatures; but in their power, and as they are spiritually made, they are the mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ."

This looks like a clear preference of the theory which is so vigorously rejected by modern Ritualists, that the presence of Christ in the elements of the Eucharist is "virtual," not personal.

He interprets Augustine as teaching "that Sacraments are one thing and the things of which they are Sacraments another. For the Body in which Christ suffered, and the Blood which flowed from His side, are the things themselves; whilst the mysteries of these things are the Sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ, which are celebrated in memory of the Lord's passion." The Elements, he continues, still resting on the authority of Augustine, are called the Body and Blood of Christ, just as the days which commemorate His passion and

Resurrection are spoken of as though they were the actual days on which Christ suffered and rose again. "We say, to-day, or to-morrow, or the next day is the Passion or the Resurrection of the Lord, though the very days on which these things were done have for many days passed away."

He appeals to St. Isidore as teaching that the Lord's Passion was once accomplished, but that "the *memory* of it is represented in sacred and solemn rites."

He quotes a remarkable passage in which a parallel is drawn between Jewish sacrifices and the Christian Eucharist :—

"In those carnal victims there was a signification of the Flesh of Christ, which He, without sin, was to offer for our sins, and of that Blood which for the remission of our sins He was to pour forth ; whilst in this sacrifice there is the thanksgiving and commemoration of the Flesh of Christ He hath offered for us, and of the Blood which He hath shed for us. . . . In those sacrifices, therefore, what was to be given us was figuratively signified ; but in this sacrifice, what has already been given is evidently shown."

Quoting from the prayers offered at the celebration of the Eucharist, in which the Sacrament is spoken of as a pledge of eternal life, and as the celebration "in figure" of great spiritual blessings, he maintains that the elements and the spiritual blessings themselves "differ as much from each other as a pledge doth from that thing of which it is given to us as the pledge ; as much as an image doth from that thing of which it is the image ; as much as the figure doth from the truth."

His closing words contain a summary statement of the doctrine maintained throughout the treatise :—

"We are taught," he says, "both by our Saviour and by St. Paul the Apostle, that this Bread and Cup, which are placed on the altar, are placed there in figure or in memory of the Lord's death, that they may recall to our present remembrance that which was done in times past, so that being put in remembrance of His passion, we may by it be made partakers of the heavenly gift, whereby we have been freed from death ; knowing well that when we shall arrive at the vision of Christ, we shall

have no need of such like instruments to remind us what His boundless mercy hath endured for us ; for we shall then see Him face to face ; we shall not be reminded by the outward admonition of temporal things, but by the contemplation of Truth itself shall see how we ought to render thanks to the Author of our salvation.

“ Yet let it not be thought, from my saying this, that in the mystery of the Sacrament, the Body and Blood of the Lord are not received by the faithful, for faith receiveth that which it believeth, not that which the eye beholdeth. It is spiritual meat and spiritual drink ; spiritually doth it feed the soul, and giveth life which shall satisfy for ever, as our Saviour saith Himself when commending to us this mystery, ‘ It is the Spirit that quickeneth : the flesh profiteth nothing.’ ”

No Protestant could desire a more explicit protest against the present Roman theory. The doctrine of Ratramnus is far more hostile to the Tridentine definition than the doctrine of Luther. And yet Ratramnus lived six hundred years before Luther was born, and writes like a man who is upholding the traditional doctrine of the Church against the innovations of heresy.*

Though the theological tendencies of the age were strongly in favour of the new theory, it had to fight hard for victory. Early in the eleventh century it was opposed, though with less clearness and definiteness, and with frequent vacillation and perilous concessions, by Berengarius. He maintained that the presence of Christ in the elements was spiritual, not substantial ; that in Holy Scripture the elements are spoken of as Bread and Wine, even after the act of consecration ; and that it is contrary to the order of nature that the accidents should remain after the substance has been changed. Like his predecessors, he relied very much on the authority of Augustine. Throughout the Western Church his views

* Ratramnus deserves to be remembered with eternal gratitude and honour by English Protestants. Ridley took this little treatise with him into the country in 1545, and through reading it was convinced that the Roman theory of Transubstantiation was a heresy and an innovation. He communicated his discovery to Cranmer in 1546, and they examined the doctrine together. The examination resulted in Cranmer's rejection of the Roman theory. Ridley, when standing before the Commissioners at Oxford in 1555, after eulogizing the learning, godliness, and argumentative power of Ratramnus, added, “ This man was the first who pulled me by the ear, and forced me from the common error of the Roman Church, to a more diligent search of Scripture and ecclesiastical writers on this question.”

commanded considerable support. He had powerful opponents, but he had also powerful friends,—Hildebrand among the number, who, even after he ascended the Papal throne, did his best to shelter Berengarius from his foes.

Even in the twelfth century, so orthodox a theologian as Peter Lombard wrote, “*Si quæritur qualis est illa conversio, an formalis, an substantialis, vel alterius generis definire non sufficio.*” Abelard declared that the controversy as to whether the Bread was merely a symbol or the substance of the Body of Christ, had not yet terminated.* But the doctrine of Paschasius was steadily making way. Hildebert of Mans, is said to have introduced into the technical language of the Church the portentous noun *Transubstantiatio*, and Stephen, Bishop of Autun, the verb *Transubstantiare*. And at last, the word and the thing were invested with the authority of the Western Church at the Council of Lateran, A.D. 1215. After a struggle of three centuries and a half, the triumph of Paschasius was complete.

It is not affirmed that before the ninth century there had been no approach to the doctrine which has now for more than six hundred years been an article of faith in the Roman Church. Towards the end of the seventh century Anastasius,† a monk of Mount Sinai, in his *Ὁδηγὸς*, taught the doctrine of Transubstantiation in a form far grosser than that which it assumed in the writings of Paschasius. In a dialogue between an orthodox believer and a heretic, who denied that the body of our Lord, previous to His resurrection, was subject to the ordinary changes and accidents which belong to human nature, Anastasius puts into the mouth of the representative of the true faith, a singular challenge. Tell me, he says, since

* Neander, *History of Doctrine*, p. 531.

† There are three ecclesiastical writers of this name; the earliest lived in the latter half of the sixth century; the latest in the latter half of the eighth.

you believe that the Body of Christ from the moment of its union with the Divinity is incorruptible as the Divinity itself, whether the Sacrifice of the most holy Body and Blood of Christ, which you offer and partake, is the real Body and Blood of the Son of God, or common bread such as is sold in the market, and a mere type of the Body of Christ, like the sacrifice of the goat offered by the Jews? God forbid, replies the other, that we should say that the Holy Communion is the mere type of the Body of Christ, or mere bread; we truly receive the very Body and Blood of Christ, the Son of God, who was born of Mary, the Holy Mother of God, ever virgin. To this the orthodox believer assents, and replies, Come, then, since Christ Himself testifies that what we, the faithful, receive, is really His own Body and Blood, bring to us a portion of the elements consecrated in your churches, since they are orthodox beyond all others, and let us place the holy Body and Blood of Christ in a vessel with all honour and reverence. If in a few days it undergoes no corruption, or change, or alteration, it will be clear that you are right in affirming that Christ, from the very moment of the Incarnation, was incorruptible; but if it is corrupted or changed, you must acknowledge, either, that what you receive in the Eucharist is not the true Body of Christ, but a type and mere bread, and that because of your perverted faith the Holy Spirit has not descended upon it; or that the Body of Christ, before the resurrection, was subject to corruption, being sacrificed, delivered to death, wounded, pierced (or broken), and eaten; for, he goes on to say, an incorruptible body is subject to none of these things, as appears from the example of the incorruptible nature of angels and souls.

This challenge rests on the hypothesis, that what is given in the Eucharist is the earthly Body of Christ, and

that the consecrated Elements, and the Body and Blood of Christ, are so completely the same, that the very accidents of the one are the accidents of the other.

That in the eight century, a very strong form of the doctrine of the Real Presence was prevalent in the Eastern Church, appears from certain singular phases of the controversy on the worship of images.

It must also be acknowledged that from the writings of the Fathers, even of the first five centuries, the advocates of the doctrine of Transubstantiation are able to produce a formidable catena of quotations. And although these quotations may be met, and their force destroyed, by quotations as numerous and as striking on the other side, it is only fair to admit, that long before the doctrine assumed a definite and scientific form, the language with which many distinguished theologians spoke of the Eucharist, and the feelings with which it was generally regarded by devout men, foreshadowed the rise of some such heresy as that which was at last developed by Paschasius. What were the real opinions of the great saints and theologians of the early Church on this Sacrament, has been a subject of dispute for a thousand years. While it is impossible to produce any treatise belonging to the first eight centuries, in which the doctrine of Transubstantiation is definitely stated and defended, and while innumerable passages may be alleged from the writings of the most illustrious of the Fathers, which seem to be inconsistent with it, controversialists on the other side may answer, that the quotations from the Fathers, on which the opponents of Transubstantiation rely, are only analogous to those Arianizing passages on the Trinity which occur in the most orthodox writers before the Council of Nicæa; that every article of the creed has existed in solution in the mind of the Church before it

has been defined, and that until the definition has been arrived at, uniform exactness of statement is not to be looked for; that the spirit with which the Church of the centuries before Paschasius regarded the Eucharist finds its only true dogmatic ground in his theory of the change effected in the elements by consecration; and that the final determination of the doctrine by the Council of Lateran was, therefore, but the formal expression of what was manifestly the implicit faith of preceding ages.

For those who desire to pursue this perplexing question, controversial theologians have prepared ample materials. Scarcely a sentence written by any ecclesiastical writer, from Ignatius to Bernard, which could be supposed to lend any support to either side, has escaped the keen and zealous scrutiny of controversialists. Wearisome folios attest the industry and ardour with which Romanists and Protestants alike have endeavoured to sustain their respective positions by the suffrages of the ancient Church. Most Protestants will perhaps be satisfied with seeing that the Fathers can be quoted with at least as much plausibility on their own side as on the side of their opponents; with remembering that nothing is easier than to mistake the rhetoric of religious emotion for the expression of dogmatic faith; that when the doctrine of Transubstantiation was first systematically stated, it was met with severe opposition; and that it did not receive the formal sanction of a general council till the commencement of the thirteenth century. But it will be necessary to return to the question of patristic authority in discussing the theory of the "Real Presence."

Even after the decision of the Council of Lateran,—the Great Council, as the canonists call it,—solitary theologians, popular reformers, and restless communities of devout men in various parts of Europe, continued to maintain an audible protest—a protest which had to be

silenced and suppressed by other and sharper weapons than quotations from Scripture or the Fathers. Within a period considerably less than that during which the doctrine of Paschasius had been fighting its way to whatever sanction it could receive from a General Council of the West, nearly half the West renounced it ; and by the intense hostility which this doctrine provoked among Protestants, the great quarrel, which ended in the eternal renunciation of the authority of the Roman See by the races sprung from the German stock, was greatly embittered.

Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, and all the Churches usually classed by ecclesiastical historians under the pleasant title of "Separatists," have been unanimous in rejecting it.

And this, it may be retorted, is the extreme limit of their unanimity. They agree, not to profess a solitary doctrine, but simply to reject an article of faith which is unanimously held by a Church which outnumbers them all.

But is it quite certain that the Church of Rome is unanimous on this doctrine ? That all her members declare that their faith is expressed by the decrees of the Council of Trent is no proof of their unanimity. Tractarians and Evangelicals, men who deny that infants are spiritually regenerated in baptism, and men who believe it, declare that their faith is expressed in the Anglican Office ; but their profession of faith in the same words does not prove their acceptance of the same theory.

To those who are awed by the grand and imposing conception of a Church including within its communion men of every variety of race and of every type of civilization, and proclaiming that through all the storms of excitement through which the human intellect has passed,

its authority has secured for its members perfect unity and rest in the great articles of the Christian faith, it may be of some use to exhibit the "variations" of Roman theologians on the mystery of the Eucharist.

That differences of opinion of some kind existed in the Council of Trent itself on this subject is well known ; but it is alleged that these differences related not to the fact that in the Eucharist the Elements are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, but to the mode of the change ; the differences were, however, sufficiently serious to give the Council considerable trouble, and an apparent reconciliation was secured at last only by an evasion of the questions in dispute. When it was found hopeless to bring the Franciscans and Dominicans to a genuine agreement as to what Transubstantiation really is, "it was determined," says Father Paul, "in the general Congregation to use as few words as was possible, and to make an expression so universal as might be accommodated to the meaning of both parties."

On the question, whether or not Christ offered to the Father a propitiatory sacrifice when He celebrated the Last Supper, it seemed equally impossible to obtain unanimity, and it was therefore "recommended that the decree should indeed declare that Christ offered Himself to the Father at the Last Supper under the species of Bread and Wine, but that no mention should be made of the nature of that offering, seeing that the opinions of the prelates did not agree regarding it." * The recommendation was eventually adopted. But skilfully as the decrees were framed, it would not, perhaps, be too bold to affirm that the definition of the Council of Trent expresses a theory which no Roman theologian of eminence has ever accepted.

* Waterworth's *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*: Preliminary Essay, p. 189.

The Tridentine doctrine is,* that the substance of the Bread by a supernatural change becomes the substance of the Body of our Lord, and the substance of the Wine the substance of His Blood, the accidents of the Elements remaining unchanged.

But do Roman theologians believe this? Or, if any do, has this opinion been common in their Church? The general theory is, that the substance of the Elements disappears,—whether it is annihilated or not is undetermined,—and that the substance of the Body of Christ simply *takes its place*. There is no *conversio* here. “If,” said an old Puritan Morning Lecturer, “the water in the water-pots of Cana had been drawn off after they had been filled, and if they had been filled again with wine from a neighbouring cellar, there would have been no change of the water into wine.” This is the first great difficulty of the Roman theologians; it is hardly possible for them to escape the admission that the substance of the Bread, instead of being changed into the substance of the Body of Christ, as the Council of Trent affirms, simply gives place to it.

If it be contended that the substance of the Bread is actually changed into the substance of the Body, a very grave question emerges; for when one substance is changed into another, it is plain that both must be affected by the process; but the warning of Albertus Magnus, that it is not safe to affirm that the change effected by consecration affects in any way the Body of Christ, has had sufficient authority to make theologians cautious of any theory that appeared to violate it.

* “And because that Christ our Redeemer declared that which He offered under the species of Bread to be truly His own Body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God—and this Holy Synod doth now declare it anew—that by the consecration of the Bread and of the Wine a conversion is made (*conversionem fieri*) of the whole substance of the Bread into the substance of the Body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the Wine into the substance of His Blood, which conversion (*quæ conversio*) is by the holy Catholic Church suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.”—Decrees and Canons, Council of Trent, sess. xiii. cap. iv.

The supreme perplexity in which the theory involves its adherents comes from this,—that the Body of Christ exists before the consecration of the Elements, and it is profanity to suppose that it undergoes any change. Since it is pre-existent, consecration cannot create it; all that it can do is to cause it to be *there*—under the species of Bread and Wine. But then arise innumerable questions. The place of the Body of Christ is in heaven. When it comes to be under the accidents of the Elements, does it pass through the space between heaven and the altar? If not, was it present under the accidents of the Elements before Transubstantiation? Again, if consecration does nothing more than cause the body of Christ to be where it was not before, the words, declarative or effective of the mystery, should not be, “*This* is my Body,” but, “*Here* is my Body.” But Transubstantiation should have for its “term” a substance; but this is to make it “terminate” simply in a Presence. These are not the suggestions of Protestant hostility; they are difficulties originating with Roman theologians themselves, and difficulties which have suggested their conflicting theories of the mystery. Perhaps the most ingenious theory of all is, that Transubstantiation is an action which *would* produce the Body and Blood of Christ if they did not already exist; that as they already exist, they cannot be, properly speaking, produced; but that Transubstantiation produces them *so far* as they can be produced.*

But there are differences of another kind to perplex those who think to find in the theology of Rome the

* Albertinus, in his great work, *De Eucharistia*, gives an account of nine or ten different Romish theories of the change effected by consecration—theories which are, in fact, for the most part different *doctrines*. The rocks on which most of them split are indicated in the text. It would be difficult, happily, to find language in English that would express these theories at all accurately. They are interesting as showing what real differences exist under the show of unity, and especially as proving that the doctrine affirmed by the Council of Trent—that there is an actual conversion of the substance of the Bread into the substance of the Body of Christ—is uniformly evaded.

determination of all their perplexities. What was the form of consecration used by our Lord Himself in celebrating the Supper?

To this there are at least seven replies:—(1) He consecrated without using any words at all, and Transubstantiation was already effected before He said, "This is my Body." (2) He consecrated when He "blessed" in words of which we are ignorant. (3) He consecrated with the words, "This is my Body," but the words were used twice, first in consecrating and again in distributing. (4) He consecrated with the words, "This is My Body," and the Evangelists have not given us the exact order of the Rite in connecting these words with the distribution. (5) He consecrated with the words "This is my Body," and they were so spoken as to cover the three acts of blessing, breaking and distributing. (6) He consecrated not when He blessed, but when He said, "This is my Body"—in the act of distribution. (7) He consecrated when He "blessed" the Elements and said, "This is my Body," the action being one and indivisible, though the Evangelists could not escape speaking as if the one followed the other. There is a further dispute as to whether the words, "Shed for the remission of sins," form part of the consecrating formula for the Cup.

Nor will it do for Roman controversialists to reproach Protestants with their want of agreement in the interpretation of the words of institution. English readers are familiar with the keen chapters in Jeremy Taylor's famous treatise, in which he illustrates the chaotic confusion of Romish divines on this very point. The eloquent bishop evidently uses not only his own vast reading to overwhelm his adversaries, but also the treasures of erudition accumulated by Albertinus, who seems to have found his supreme joy in demonstrating

the want of harmony among the theologians of the infallible Church. The account given by Albertinus of the various interpretations of *Hoc*, in the sentence, *Hoc est corpus meum*, occupies twenty folio columns of tolerably compact Latin; and yet he does not profess to give all the interpretations that have been suggested, "but only those which are more common, and which, on account of the eminence, or number of those who have adopted them, may be thought the more probable."

Passing over the more subtle distinctions between interpretation and interpretation, that the reader may not be driven quite insane,* the meanings assigned to this perplexing pronoun by Roman divines may be reduced to six. It denotes :—(1) Nothing. (2) The accidents of the Bread (3) The Bread—either (*a*) the substance and accidents together; or (*b*) the substance of the Bread apart from the accidents; or (*c*) the substance of the Bread, not *quâ* the substance of the Bread, but *quâ* substance in general. (4) That individual existence which ultimately becomes the Body of Christ. (5) That which is contained under the accidents of the Bread (*quod alii vocant* individuum vagum, *alii substantiam* vagè et indeterminatè spectatam). (6) The Body of Christ.

The meanings assigned to *est* must vary with those assigned to *Hoc*. The principal meanings are four. *Est* stands for :—(1) "is changed into," "has become;" (2) "shall be;" (3) "contains;" or else (4) it is the simple copula affirming the identity of subject and pre-

* The following extract, which Albertinus gives from Catharinus at the commencement of this chapter (L. I. cap. viii.), is too pathetically humorous not to be quoted; translation would destroy its flavour :—"Lector consideret laborem et angustias usque (pene dixi) ad necem fere omnium scribentium, dum rogati quid significet pronomen illud, *Hoc*, tot et tanta scribunt et adeo varia ut *valeant ad insaniam redigere Lectorem nimium considerantem*. B. Thomæ multorum responsiones recitat, et omnes reprehendit. Ponet suam, quam posteriores Scotus et Petrus Aureolus reprehendunt et quilibet tandem suam adjecit. Et Scotus quidem tot verba effundit et tot elicit conclusiones, ut si quis valeat legere legis patientiam admirer, et nihilominus, in tanto multiloquio suam narrans ita trepidat ut se nondum securum ostendat."—Catharinus De Verbis quibus Conficitur, &c.

dicare, though it is difficult to understand how this should be, since that identity is not consummated when *est* is uttered.

Of course, there are also various interpretations of the word *corpus*; but to state these is hardly possible without a freer use of scholastic technicalities than the nature and object of this Essay would permit.

There are further differences of opinion in reference to the proof of the doctrine. When the controversy concerning the withholding of the cup from the laity was at its height, it became common for Roman controversialists to maintain that the discourse in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, which makes it as necessary to "drink the blood" as to "eat the flesh" of the Son of Man, did not refer to the Lord's Supper, but to spiritual communion. The discourse, however, lent itself too easily to the theory of Transubstantiation to be finally surrendered; and when the storm about communion in both kinds had somewhat sunk, the direct reference of this discourse to the Eucharist was re-asserted.

The indefatigable Albertinus gives a terrible list of popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and doctors of theology who were committed to the heretical interpretation of this great passage.* Bellarmine's apology for the aberrations of these distinguished men is deliciously

* "Adversarii pro solita sua quam indesinenter mentiuntur, unitate hic etiam inter se dissident. Multi enim inter illos (quorum Salmero, Bellarminus, et Vasques recensent nonnullos, nos verò plures enumerabimus) imprudenter admodum a Maldonato temeritatis ac imprudentiæ stigmatibus notati, negativam nobiscum tuerentur. *Pontifices duo*, Innocentius tertius et Pius secundus. *Cardinales quatuor* Bonaventura, de Alliaco, Cusanus, Cajetanus: *Archiepiscopi duo*, Richardus Armachanus et Guerrerius Granatensis: *Episcopi quinque*, Stephanus Eduensis, Durandus Mimatensis, Gulielmus Altissiodorensis, Lindanus Ruremundensis, Jansenius Gandavensis, quem et alicubi sequitur Tannerus licet inconstanter: *plerique Theologiæ Doctores ac Professores concionatores que celeberrimi*, Alexander de Hales, Richardus de Mediavilla, Joannes Gerson, Joannes de Ragusio, Gabriel Biel, Thomas Waldensis, Author libri, cujus titulus, Tractatus contra perfidiam quorundam Bohemorum, Joannes Maria Verratus, Tilmanus Segebergensis, Joannes Eccius, Joannes Major, Astesanus, Conradus, Joannes Ferus, Conradus Sasgerus, Joannes Hesselius, Ruardus Tapperus, Palatios, qui illam sibi arridere dicit et novissimè Nicolaus Rigaltius. Cæteri qui in magno quoque sunt numero affirmativam amplectuntur, nonnulli etiam tanta pertinacia ac animi ferocitate, ut Rossensis ausus fuerit scribere, Salmerone et Stapletono non improbantibus, *Se non dubitare eum dicere desertum et rejectum atque reprobatum a Deo, qui diutius contenderit aut non esse veram*

characteristic. "There are, however, a few [Catholics]," he says, "who, that they might more easily reply to the followers of Huss and Luther attempting to defend communion in both kinds from this chapter, taught that the chapter does not refer to the Sacramental eating and drinking of the Body and Blood of the Lord. There is, however, a great difference between the Catholics and the heretics, although they seem to agree; for the Catholics embraced that opinion with the very best intention, that they might more easily maintain the truth; the heretics, that they might more easily attack it." That both Catholics and heretics ought to be more anxious about finding the true interpretation of our Lord's discourse than about employing it for controversial purposes, does not seem to have occurred to this eminent theologian.

But what is most startling of all is, that in the Missal itself there are unambiguous traces of incoherent and contradictory theories of the Service. If anything in the Roman Church can be regarded as settled, it is that the mystery of Transubstantiation is effected when the priest pronounces the words, "*Hoc est enim corpus meum*;" before these words are spoken the Bread is mere Bread; it is when these have passed the lips of the priest that the "whole substance of the Bread is changed into the substance of the Body of the Lord." And yet before these words are uttered the Host is offered to God by the priest as a propitiatory Sacrifice, with the prayer, "Accept, O Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, this unspotted Host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God, for my innumerable sins, offences, and negligences, and for all here present;

Christi carnem et sanguinem in Eucharistia, aut verba Joannis in 6 capite ad eandem Eucharistiam nequaquam spectare." Albertinus, *De Eucharistia* (Daventriæ, 1655), pp. 209-210. Those who wish to verify the authorities appealed to, will find, in Albertinus, references under every name in this formidable list.

as also for all faithful Christians, both living and dead, that it may avail them unto life everlasting." A prayer, similar in effect, though much less definite, is presented at the oblation of the chalice, and before the awful words have changed the mingled Water and Wine into the Blood of Christ.

These prayers would never have had their present place in the office, if the office had been originally constructed under the control of the Tridentine theory. In the celebration of the Mass itself—the central act of Romish worship—there are indications that the Tridentine theory is an innovation.

It admits of proof, therefore, that the apparent unanimity of the Romish Church on this dogma is only apparent. Every kind of variation of opinion that can invalidate the claim to unanimity may be shown to have existed in the Romish Church, in relation to this Sacrament. Romish theologians are not agreed as to what Transubstantiation really is. They differ on the question whether, in the original celebration of the Supper, the mysterious change in the elements was effected by the words which are declared to effect it now. They differ in their interpretation of those words. They differ as to the Scripture proof upon which the dogma rests. And the whole theory is utterly destroyed by the very Eucharistic office which has been recited by Romish priests for centuries, and is recited still in every Romish church throughout Christendom.

To discuss the arguments which are alleged in support of this doctrine is no part of the purpose of the present Essay. Any discussion would be incomplete that did not include the investigation of the claims of the Romish Church to require the acceptance of articles of faith which cannot be proved from Holy Scripture. In reply to

an opponent, who maintained that no express Scriptural authority could be quoted which, apart from the decisions of the Church, could demonstrate the doctrine of Transubstantiation, Bellarmine admits that "perhaps this is not altogether improbable; for, although the Scripture which we have already alleged may seem to us sufficiently clear to convince any man who is not utterly destitute of candour and honesty [possit cogere hominem non protervum], yet this may perhaps be justly doubted, since the most learned and subtle men, such as Scotus, have thought differently."*

It is something to have shown that this doctrine, so far from having been received by the Church from the earliest Christian antiquity, provoked strong hostility when it was first explicitly taught; and that the Roman Church has been distracted by conflicting opinions on the manner in which the doctrine should be scientifically defined, and on every point connected with it.

II. With those theologians of the English Church who contend for a doctrine of the Eucharist which theologically is separated by the very finest lines from that which is professed by Romanists, the controversy is more manageable. In the earlier stages of the Oxford movement, it was not very easy to understand exactly what was meant by those who advocated the theory of the "Real Presence." This difficulty has disappeared. There is probably no essential difference between the doctrine which was maintained in the "Tracts for the Times" rather more than thirty years ago, and the doctrine which is maintained in the recent "Tracts for the Day." The sacramental theory of Dr. Littledale and Mr. Orby Shipley is fundamentally the same as that of Dr. Pusey. But the whole manner of recent Ritualists is singularly different from

* De Sac. Euch., L. III. cap. xxiii.

that of the old Tractarians. The hesitation and indistinctness with which the doctrine used to be stated have gone. The theory, to use an image of Burke's, is no longer "in the gristle;" its bones are firmly set. Even Archdeacon Wilberforce, in his "Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist," was less trenchant than the men who are writing now. There was an intellectual awe in the earlier writers, when they approached this discussion, which their successors appear to have lost. It is not meant that Ritualistic theologians are wanting in reverence for what they acknowledge to be a wonderful and fearful mystery; but their reverence does not interfere with their intellectual freedom and vigour in expressing and defending their faith. The awful cloud which once filled the whole temple, so that human weakness could not minister even in its outer courts, has gathered into the inner sanctuary; and the common daylight, in which men can see clearly and work freely, is shining elsewhere.

What is meant by the doctrine of the "Real Presence," may be seen from the following passages, extracted from an essay in the "Tracts for the Day," edited by Mr. Orby Shipley:—

"What was done in the Incarnation is renewed in the Sacrament; not in the same manner, but in a certain resemblance and proportion." (P. 232.)

. "There is in both cases a real union between the earthly and the Heavenly;—in the Incarnation, between the Eternal Word and man's nature; in the Eucharist, between the Person of Christ and the Elements of Bread and Wine; so that it may be said that there is a renewal or continuation of the Incarnation." (P. 232.)

"In order to this union of the Flesh of Christ with ours, He first incarnates Himself in the hands of the priest; that is, at the moment of consecration, Christ unites Himself, Body, Soul, and Divinity, in an ineffable manner, with the elements of Bread and Wine: and so near does this approach to the union of the Divine and the Human in the Incarnation, that Bishop Andrews calls it 'a kind of hypostatical union of the Sign and the Thing signified, so united together as are the two natures of Christ.'" (Pp. 232, 233.)

"By the Real Presence of Christ is not meant a presence by Divine power or spiritual grace ; but the Presence of His very, true Body—not anything different from the Body which He had on earth, and which He took up into heaven—not anything to which the name or properties of His Body are merely ascribed in a sacramental sense, but that very Body which He took of the substance of the Virgin Mary His mother, which was 'crucified, dead, and buried,' and ascended far above all heavens." (P. 245.)

"In the Eucharist the conjunction of the Elements with the Body and Blood is permanent ; that is to say, it remains as long as the outward species remain." (P. 237.)

"It is a miracle as great as any of those recorded in Scripture." (P. 248.)

"It is the complement of the Incarnation, which began in the union of God with man's nature, and culminates in the union of individual men with God. . . . The doctrines are mutually dependent. There could have been no Eucharist but for the Incarnation. There could have been no receiving of Christ's Body in any sense, unless He had assumed a real Body. And the Incarnation would have been of no benefit to us, individually, but for Sacramental Communion, by which 'we are made One with Christ, and Christ with us.' Hence the Eucharist is frequently called the 'Extension of the Incarnation.' " (P. 232.)

"If Christ is not Present, as the Substance of our Offering, we have nothing to present to God but the material things, 'the outward signs,' which can no more make us acceptable than the legal victims, which could never take away sin. . . . Christ is truly, really, and substantially Present under the Form of Bread and Wine ; and we offer, not these visible productions of the earth, but Him as our Propitiation before God." (P. 262.)

"Whole Christ—Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity is then present ; [at the moment of consecration ;] and shall we not worship Him with adoring faith and the deepest prostration of our spirits ?" (P. 278.)

"The adoration of Christ in the Sacrament is not a thing to be merely tolerated. It takes the rank of a Christian duty, according to the famous saying of Augustine," &c. (P. 280.)

The Ritualistic doctrine cannot be charged with any want of decision and definiteness. The Bread and the Wine become the Body and the Blood of Christ ; they are changed into the very Body which He took of the Virgin Mary, and the glory of which saints and angels behold in heaven. A miracle great as that of the Incarnation is

accomplished in every celebration of the Eucharist,—a miracle in some respects far more wonderful than that of which it is said to be the “extension.” For the possibility of the Incarnation has been thought to lie in this, that man was made in the “image of God ;” that human nature should be taken into personal union with God was, therefore, contemplated and provided for in the original creation of our race ; but no such “image” of Christ can be supposed to exist in the Bread which has been made by human hands, and baked in an oven, or in the Wine which comes from the cellars of Bordeaux or Cadiz. The Elements so assumed into personal union with our Lord—made one with His Body, Soul, and Divinity—are offered to God as a Propitiatory Sacrifice. They are worshipped. Christ—the living, personal, glorified Christ, being indissolubly united with the Elements, He is received not only by “worthy” communicants, but by the unworthy ; so that every tide-waiter who took the Sacrament to qualify for office, and went away from the “altar” to celebrate his appointment with a drunken carouse, received Christ.

The foundations of proof on which this stupendous structure is built ought to be sure and strong. The miracle is without a parallel. It is alleged, indeed, that Christ by “a simple act of volition converted water into wine,” and that “the same power can now turn Wine into His own Blood, to fulfil the purposes of His love in the Blessed Sacrament.” But the miracle at Cana has no analogy to that of the Altar. The water when changed into wine ceased to be water ; if we had been told that it remained water still, and that though it had really become wine, all its original properties and effects remained, there would have been some remote similarity between that miracle and this. To make the

analogy somewhat closer, it would be necessary to add, that the water, still remaining water, did not merely become wine, but became the very wine which had been provided at the beginning of the feast, and which had been already drunk by the guests; for the Bread becomes the Body of Christ, which has already been "received" by millions of communicants for more than eighteen hundred years. The resemblance between the two miracles would still be most distant; to lessen the remaining differences between them, we should require to be assured that the water—still remaining water—was changed not only into the wine which the guests had just drunk, but into wine which was lying at that moment in the cellars of the Roman Emperor in the imperial city, and that yet it was in the waterpots at Cana ready to be consumed by the Galilean peasants assembled to celebrate the marriage of their friends; for the Body of our Lord is in Heaven, and yet it is into that Body that the consecrated Bread is said to be changed. Even if this astounding addition were made to the story, much would remain to be added before the analogy could be of any real service in assisting us to accept the "mystery;" for the great wonder of all is that the Bread—remaining Bread—is made one with a living Person; if the miracle at Cana is to present any resemblance to the miracle of the Real Presence, we must further imagine that the water—remaining water—became the Body or Blood of Christ—that He Himself was not only sitting with the guests but was contained in the waterpots, and was drunk by the master of the feast.

Let no one reply, that the fact of the Real Presence is not impeached by showing that innumerable and preposterous inconsistencies result from the attempt to treat what is altogether supernatural and spiritual as though it

were included in the natural order. There is no intention to imply that the preceding paragraph has any force at all against the doctrine itself; but when the miracle of Cana is appealed to as though it could lend some support to a Mystery with which it has not the remotest analogy, it is perfectly fair to show that the appeal is illegitimate. If in doing this, it is hardly possible to avoid the appearance of attempting to throw an air of absurdity over what, if true, should be regarded with the most devout reverence, the responsibility must rest with those who weaken their own case in the attempt to strengthen it. It is an offence against taste and piety to ridicule the faith of good men; but the respect due to honest religious convictions cannot be claimed for the sophisms on which these convictions are sometimes rested.

There is another line of remark by which the advocates of this doctrine endeavour to lessen the natural recoil of the intellect from the mystery. That our Lord had "a solid, tangible Body," that He was "no phantasm," is, of course, earnestly maintained. But it is alleged that "there was inherent in His very Body, powers, supernatural and Divine, which set Him above the laws of human nature, only that it was His will to restrain their exercise, except in special cases." (P. 254). Some of the illustrations given of these "special cases" are simply instances in which Christ exerted His miraculous power over external nature. That Christ walked on the sea, suggests no difficulty to any mind that believes Him to be the Creator and Ruler of the material universe. But the advocates of the Real Presence allege miracles of another kind—miracles which do not merely imply the suspension or overruling of what are called natural laws, but miracles which cannot be believed except in defiance of all the laws of the human understanding itself; and these are the miracles which—if

they could be shown to have taken place—would be of some use in relation to this mysterious doctrine.

It is said, for instance, that our Lord "could move from one place to another without passing over the intervening space." (P. 254.) Where are we told this? "The disciples," the writer adds, "left Him on the land, and straightway He was with them on the sea; and, without perceptible motion, the 'ship was immediately at the land whither they went.'" There are some curious and very gratuitous additions here to the story as given by the evangelists. The writer, by inserting the word "straightway," which does not appear in the Gospels, appears to wish it to be understood that our Lord came from the land where the disciples had left Him to the ship, "without passing over the intervening space;" but St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John, all tell us that the disciples saw Jesus "walking upon the sea," and St. John speaks of Him as "drawing nigh unto the ship," all of which expressions certainly imply that in coming to the disciples He did "pass over the intervening space." Where the writer learnt that the ship, as soon as our Lord entered it, reached the land "without perceptible motion," he does not inform us; the three evangelists who narrate the miracle say nothing of the kind. If this is supposed to be implied in the statement of St. John, "that immediately the ship was at the land whither they went," the "hidden powers" of our Lord's Body, which enabled it to "move from one place to another without passing over the intervening space," must be transferred to the ship itself and to all the people that were in it, which would be a somewhat startling hypothesis.

Then, again, it is said that though after the Resurrection "He still had 'flesh and bones,' palpable to touch, solid matter offered no resistance to His passage through

it." (P. 255). The only proof given rests on an untenable arrangement of the events of the morning of the Resurrection, and an untenable interpretation of the narrative given by St. John of our Lord's appearance to the disciples in the evening :—" On Easter morning His re-animated Body had issued from the sepulchre without rending the rock or bursting the sealed stone ; and in the evening He suddenly stood in the midst of the disciples without entering through the barred doors." This is to create superfluous wonders in the Gospel, in order to shade off the startling contrast between the alleged miracle effected by the Eucharistic consecration and all miracles besides. There is no proof that the stone remained sealed after our Lord had left the sepulchre, or that He entered the room in which the disciples were met while the doors were barred.

If the Elements become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the miracle is absolutely unique, in all its circumstances and attributes. Every attempt to alleviate the difficulties in which it is involved by alleging analogous wonders is futile. Nothing analogous can be found. The Mystery stands alone.

The Anglican theologians who maintain the doctrine of the Real Presence are, on the whole, less fortunate than the Romish theologians who maintain the doctrine of Transubstantiation. If the Anglicans are relieved from the necessity of defending the philosophical theory with which the Romish creed is entangled, they are deprived of the great and formidable stronghold to which, when hard pressed, a Roman controversialist is always able to retreat.

There is nothing absolutely and obviously absurd in affirming that the Church of Rome has authority in matters of faith. The claim is false, but it may be

seriously defended by thoughtful and learned men without exposing themselves to the ridicule of the human race. That the decrees of the Council of Lateran express the mind of that Church to which our Lord promised the permanent guidance of the Spirit of Truth, though an assertion which will hardly bear looking at in the light of the history of the Council, may yet be supported by a very fair show of argument. But that the Church of England, whatever that Church may be—the English Crown and Parliament, the Bishops, the Clergy, Convocation, the English people, or those of them who have been baptized by the Anglican clergy, or those of them who have been confirmed by the Anglican Bishops, or those of them who regularly receive the communion at the Anglican altars—that the English Church, whose members no man can define and of whose authentic organs and true rulers no man can be sure, should be appealed to as having any shadow of power to determine a disputed doctrine, is so extravagant an hypothesis, that it may be doubted whether the most devoted of her sons would wittingly commit himself to maintain it. And if in a moment of heroic devotion any Anglican theologian should rashly demand for the Catechism of his Church, her Articles, and her Office a submission such as that which Rome claims for the decrees of Popes and Councils, there is this further difficulty, that it seems uncertain whether the documents of the Church of England teach the Real Presence or not. The ambiguous testimony of a Church destitute of authority, is the sandiest of foundations on which to rest a great Mystery like this.

Indeed, the *proof* of the doctrine is never really sought in the documents of the English Church itself; all that is seriously meant by the ingenious and very effective arguments of such writers as Mr. Cobb* is this : it being

* The Kiss of Peace—a very keen and able pamphlet.

assumed, or proved on other grounds, that the doctrine is true, it can be shown that the documents of the English Church, so far from contradicting it, actually teach it; and, therefore, those who profess to be faithful ministers of that Church are bound to teach it too. The argument, though on some points very difficult to refute, is considerably enfeebled by the fact that probably three-fourths of the clergy and laity of the English Church, from the time of Elizabeth to our own, have read the documents in a different sense.

Nor can the Anglican theologians derive much strength for their doctrine from that vague appeal to the "Catholic Church" and to "Catholic opinion," which is so common in their writings. What do they mean by the "Church?" Where are we to find the authoritative organs of "Catholic opinion?" They cannot mean to appeal to Christendom as it actually exists,—to Rome, which declares that their "orders" are invalid, and their very "consecration" of the Elements an idle form,—to Constantinople, which refuses to acknowledge their definition of the doctrine of the Trinity, and from which they are separated by a double schism, by the original quarrel which divided the whole of the West from the whole of the East, and by the later quarrel which has divided the English Church from the remainder of the West. They cannot mean to appeal to the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of continental Europe, or to the "separatist" Churches by which they are surrounded in this island; this would be to abandon all their characteristic claims. It must be to the Church of the early centuries that they appeal. But then they are met by this grave difficulty, that in no creed and in no council, the authority of which is acknowledged by the English Church, has the doctrine of the Real Presence any place.

The way in which this difficulty is met by the writer of the tract already quoted, shows how insuperable it is.

"It has been observed," he says, "sometimes with surprise, or by way of objection, that the doctrine of the Eucharist has no place among the Articles of Faith in the Creed. That, however, can scarcely be admitted, seeing the Doctrine of the Incarnation is distinctly asserted in the shortest of our Creeds, and set forth with elaborate definition in the Nicene and Athanasian, as the fundamental Truth of Christianity."

By what subtlety of logic it can be shown that because a creed affirms that the Eternal Word became man in the Person of Our Lord Jesus Christ, it also affirms that the Bread and Wine of the Eucharist become the Body and Blood of Christ, and are thus made one with His Soul and Divinity, may perhaps excite the curiosity of "uncatholic" theologians.

There appears to be a very wide gulf between these two articles of faith. It seems very possible to believe the first without believing the second. Millions of devout and learned men have never felt that the doctrine of the Incarnation rendered the doctrine of the Real Presence inevitable. Stripping away the mere accessories from the argument by which the nexus between these great Mysteries is demonstrated, the whole proof amounts to this:—"Every one who admits that the restoration of human nature was the end of the Incarnation, must see that the Real Presence of Christ's Body and Blood, as well as the necessity of receiving them, is involved in that Doctrine, *since nothing else can make us the better for the Son of God having assumed our nature—nothing but that which unites us to Him, in whom is the fullness of grace and blessing.*" (P. 260.) This is to prove one assertion which requires demonstration by making another which is equally in need of it. That "nothing else" than the Real Presence "can make us the better" for the Incarnation, is certainly a very bold proposition—a proposition of a kind which

most people will think rather more difficult to prove than the Real Presence itself. To show that the Elements of the Eucharist become the Body and Blood of Christ is a trifling task, compared with that of showing that *by no other means than this* is it possible for God to grant to men the blessings which He intended to flow from the Incarnation. If this startling proposition must be proved in order to secure the authority of the creeds for the doctrine of the Real Presence, it will be wise for its advocates to do their best to establish their case without that authority.

If creeds and councils fail, the writings of the Fathers are left. In these it is maintained that the voice of "the Church" may be distinctly heard. Dr. Pusey, in his "Doctrine of the Real Presence," gives a catena of ancient authorities for the Doctrine, extending from the time of the Apostles to A.D. 451 (the Fourth General Council).

After occupying about two hundred pages with proofs that the Fathers did not teach Transubstantiation, he occupies four hundred more with what are intended to be proofs that they did teach the Doctrine held by himself and those Anglican theologians of whom he is deservedly the beloved and venerated leader. Many of the passages alleged against the creed of the Romanists will seem to some readers the best reply to those which are alleged in support of his own. He quotes, for instance, the famous passage of St. Augustine:—"If sacraments had not some likeness to the things thereof they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all; but *from this likeness* they also receive the names of the things themselves" (*Epist.* 98, *ad Bonif.*, § 9). That the mere "*likeness*" of the Elements to the Body and Blood of Christ should be given by Augustine as the reason why they are called the Body and Blood of Christ, appears hardly reconcilable with the hypothesis that he believed that in any sense they actually become the Body and

Blood of Christ. Dr. Pusey shews that there are a vast number of passages in which the Fathers speak of the Elements as types, antitypes, figures, symbols, images of Christ or of His Body and Blood; but every such passage is a reason for interpreting passages which seem to affirm a Real Objective Presence, as simply the exaggerated expression of excited faith and vehement love. If but once in the course of a long poem a man says that the portrait of his mother is before him, the most fervent declarations of filial devotion to her, the most passionate exclamations in which he says he sees her smile, hears her voice, finds rest in her love, the most earnest appeals to her for counsel and consolation, must be interpreted under the control of the solitary statement that it is her *portrait* on which he is gazing—not herself. It may be inferred from the manner of his appeals to her, that he believes that his mother's spiritual presence is with him, and that though she has passed away she is watching over her child still; the picture may have given vividness and intensity to his ordinary belief in her guardian care; imagination may have risen into faith; but when once he has spoken of a "portrait," no reader in his senses will suppose that there is anything more than a portrait present to him, or that he believes that the canvass and the colours have by "transubstantiation" or "union," or any other mysterious change become anything different from what they seem.

Moreover, if the expressions which are quoted from the Fathers on behalf of the Real Presence are to have the meaning attributed to them, if they imply a definite Sacramental doctrine, and if they are to be regarded as illustrating the mind of the "Church," then the "Church" may be shown to have believed in very many other mysteries, for which neither Dr. Pusey nor the writer of the Tract edited by Mr. Shipley asks our faith.

The following passage from Bingham should teach us to be cautious in our interpretation of the language of the Fathers, or to distrust their authority, or both.

“I observe concerning the effects of this consecration, that the very same change was supposed to be wrought by it in the waters of baptism, as by the consecration of Bread and Wine in the Eucharist. For they supposed not only the presence of the Spirit, but also the mystical presence of Christ's Blood to be here after consecration. Julius Firmicius, speaking of baptism, ‘bids men here seek for the pure waters, the undefiled fountain, where the Blood of Christ, after many spots and defilements, would whiten them by the Holy Ghost.’ Gregory Nazianzen and Basil say upon this account, ‘That a greater than the Temple, a greater than Solomon, a greater than Jonas is here, meaning Christ, by His mystical presence and the power of His blood.’ St. Austin says, ‘Baptism or the baptismal water is red, when once it is consecrated by the Blood of Christ; and this was prefigured by the waters of the Red Sea.’ Prosper is bold to say ‘That in baptism we are dipped in blood; and therefore martyrs are twice dipped in blood, first in the Blood of Christ at baptism, and then in their own blood at martyrdom.’ St. Jerome uses the same bold metaphor, explaining those words of Isaiah, ‘Wash ye, make ye clean: Be ye baptized in my blood by the laver of regeneration.’ And again, speaking of the Ethiopian eunuch, he says, ‘He was baptized in the Blood of Christ, about whom he was reading’

“After the same manner, Cæsarius says, ‘The soul goes into the living waters, consecrated and made red by the Blood of Christ.’ And Isidore says, ‘What is the Red Sea, but baptism consecrated in the Blood of Christ?’ Others tell us, that we are hereby made partakers of the Body and Blood of Christ, and eat His flesh, according to what is said in St. John's Gospel, ‘Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his Blood, ye have no life in you.’ Upon which words Fulgentius founds the necessity of baptism: ‘Forasmuch as it may be perceived by any considering man, that the Flesh of Christ is eaten and His Blood drank in the laver of regeneration.’ Hence Cyril of Alexandria says, ‘We are partakers of the spiritual Lamb in baptism.’ And Chrysostom, ‘That we thereby put on Christ, not only His Divinity, nor only His humanity, that is, His Flesh—but both together.’ And Nazianzen, ‘That in baptism we are anointed and protected by the precious Blood of Christ, as Israel was by the blood upon the door-posts in the night.’ St. Chrysostom says again, ‘That they are baptised, put on a royal garment—a purple dipped in the Blood of the Lord.’ Philo-Carpathius says, ‘The spouse of Christ, His Church, receives in baptism the seal of Christ,

being washed in the fountain of His most holy Blood.' Optatus, as we have heard before, says, 'Christ comes down by the invocation, and joins Himself to the waters of baptism.' Nay, Chrysostom, in one of his bold rhetorical flights, scruples not to tell a man that is baptised, that he immediately embraces his Lord in his arms, that he is united to His Body—nay, compounded, or consubstantiated with that Body which sits above, whither the devil has no access. Some tell us, as Isidore, 'That the water of baptism is the water that flowed out of Christ's side at His Passion: and others, as Laurentius Novariensis, 'That it is water mixed with the sacred Blood of the Son of God.' Others tell us, 'That the water is transmuted or changed in its nature by the Holy Ghost, to a sort of Divine and ineffable power.' So Cyril of Alexandria, who frequently uses the word μεταστοιχείωσις, transelementation, both when he speaks of the Water in baptism and the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, or of any other changes that are wrought in the mysteries of the Christian religion. Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory Nyssen have the same observations upon the change that is wrought in the oil, after consecration, which they make to be the same with that of the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist. 'Beware,' says Cyril, 'that you take not this ointment to be bare ointment. For as the Bread in the Eucharist, after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is not mere Bread, but the Body of Christ; so this holy ointment, after invocation, is not bare or common ointment, but it is a gift of God that makes Christ and the Holy Spirit to be present in the action.' In like manner, Gregory Nyssen makes the same change to be in the mystical oil, and in the altar itself, and in the ministers by ordination, and in the waters of baptism, as in the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist after consecration. 'Do not contemn,' says he, 'the Divine laver, nor despise it as a common thing, because of the use of water. For great and wonderful things are wrought by it. This altar, before which we stand, is but common stone in its own nature, differing nothing from other stones, wherewith our walls are built; but after it is consecrated to the service of God, and has received a benediction, it is a holy table, an immaculate altar, not to be touched by any but the priests, and that with the greatest reverence. The Bread also is at first but common Bread, but when once it is sanctified by the holy mystery, it is made and called the Body of Christ. So the mystical oil, and so the Wine, though they be things of little value before the benediction, yet, after their sanctification by the Spirit, they both of them work wonders. The same power of the Word makes a priest become honourable and venerable, when he is separated from the community of the vulgar by a new benediction. For He who before was only one of the common people, is now immediately made a Ruler and President, a Teacher of piety, and a Minister of the secret mysteries; and all these things He does without any change

in His body or shape; for to all outward appearance He is the same that He was, but the change is in His invisible soul, by an invisible power and 'grace.' Pope Leo goes one step further and tells us, 'That baptism makes a change not only in the water, but in the man who receives it; for thereby Christ receives him, and he receives Christ, and he is not the same after baptism that he was before, but the body of him that is regenerated is made the Flesh of Him that was crucified.'

Indeed, the essayist himself is distinctly conscious of the difficulty of bringing the language of the Fathers within the limits of any tenable theory. His own faith is that in the Eucharist there is a "bloodless or unbloody sacrifice," but he states, truly enough, that "the language peculiar to the actual fact—the shedding of the Victim's blood—is used by ancient writers as commonly as the mention of the Eucharist itself, and Christ is said to be sacrificed, immolated, slain upon the altar, and lying there while the priest stands over the sacrifice and prays." He explains this by the closeness of the relation between the Eucharist and the original sacrifice of our Lord, and by the fact that the Eucharist is regarded "as a representative act," "showing forth the Lord's death;" but the explanation leaves the case just where it was before;—the Fathers, in speaking of the Lord's Supper, use habitually the rhetoric of impassioned devotion; and the mere quotation of sentences in which they speak of the consecrated Elements as being Christ's Body and Blood, is valueless. An investigation of their writings, different in kind from that which is common in controversy, is necessary to arrive at their real meaning. Nothing, indeed, can be more certain than that devout men, holding the very simplest sacramental theory, may be carried, by the strong current of religious emotion, into the use of language for which, if coldly interpreted, their theory affords no justification. Such vehemence of diction, such extravagance, as some will call it, may be only an

evidence that their true opinions are too well known for them to have any fear of being misunderstood.

A singular illustration of this is afforded by a letter which recently appeared in a well-known and very vigorous Ritualist journal.* The writer, after quoting several extracts from the New Congregational Hymn-book, adds, "If such language as this does not express the doctrine of the Real Objective Presence, I confess I am at a loss to conceive what could express it. And what a marvellous harmony is produced from such widely-different singers as Doddridge, Watts, Conder, Keble, and Thomas Aquinas! all of whom are here represented. I envy the Independents their authorised hymnal. Our prose prayer-book is but half what we require." The writer is hardly accurate in speaking of this hymn-book as the "authorised" hymnal of the Independents; it was compiled by a committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, but the committee alone are responsible for it. Practically, however, he is right. The book is used without scruple by a large number—perhaps by the majority of the Congregational Churches of this country. But it is perfectly well known that these Churches will not tolerate any suggestion of a supernatural change in the Elements. They are, for the most part, Zwinglians of the purest type. The language of the Congregational hymn-book is an instance in which the paradox is illustrated, that the men who are known to be most hostile to a theory are the men who may use most fearlessly, when under strong emotion, language which, interpreted strictly, must be held to sustain it. That the compilers of the Congregational hymn-book should use, with perfect freedom, hymns written by Congregationalists, by Anglicans, by Romanists, in which the "Real Presence," and perhaps something more than the

* Church Times, January 29, 1869.

"Real Presence," may seem to be recognized, makes it more than possible that the strong language of some of the Fathers is perfectly consistent with their having held a theory as simple and bare as that which is generally received by modern Independents. The Independents use language which is supposed to express the Anglican "doctrine of a Real Objective Presence," after that doctrine has been the subject of fierce controversy, and has been consciously and deliberately rejected by themselves and their ecclesiastical ancestors for three centuries. This may seem very surprising; but it shows how very unsafe it is to infer, from similar language used by the Fathers before the Eucharistic controversy had arisen, that on this doctrine they were Anglicans.

The appeal, then, must be to our Lord Himself and to His Apostles. This is conceded by Archdeacon Wilberforce, who says that—

"An inquiry into the nature of the Holy Eucharist must be founded on Scripture, and upon that passage of Scripture by which this solemn Rite was authorized as well as explained. The authority of Him by whom they were spoken; the interest of the occasion on which they were employed; the sententious weight of the expressions themselves,—all give to the *words of institution* an importance which few other passages even of Holy Scripture can claim."*

It is, of course, contended by those who believe in the Real Presence that our Lord's words, "This is my Body," decide the controversy in their favour. The Bread does not cease to be Bread, but when duly consecrated by the priest it becomes what it became when Christ Himself uttered the words; it remains Bread, but it is also the Body of Christ. "The word *is* expresses the *identity* of the subject and predicate,"† and those who deny this interpretation are regarded as guilty of refusing to accept what our Lord asserted in the most explicit and unambiguous language.

* The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist (Third Edition), p. 6.

† Ibid, p. 98.

But even if this interpretation of our Lord's words were admitted, is it quite clear that it would necessarily follow that the amazing miracle wrought by Himself is wrought through age after age by every priest in Christendom? In that case we should have expected that Christ would have told the Apostles that the wonder which He had accomplished would be accomplished by them, and by all to whom they transmitted priestly powers. He told them that they were to break bread and to eat it, and that they were to drink wine, but these acts were to be "in remembrance" of Him. There is nothing to suggest that by repeating Christ's words they were to change the common gifts of the Divine hand into a Living and Divine Person. What they were to "eat" was "bread," what they were to "drink" was "wine;" even if He had meant them to understand that the Bread in His own hands had become His Body, and that the Wine had become His Blood, it would not follow that He also meant that the same transformation would be effected when He had left them. That the celebration was to be "in remembrance" of Him, would certainly give them quite another impression.

But those who contend so strenuously for what they maintain to be the only possible interpretation of the "copula," and who will listen to no evasion of its literal meaning, are obliged to desert their own principle. The words of our Lord, when He took the Cup, as reported by St. Luke and St. Paul, altogether refuse to submit to the treatment which is forced upon the words pronounced over the Bread. "This Cup is the new testament in my Blood." If the Bread is miraculously changed into the Body of Christ, why is not the Cup miraculously changed into the testament or covenant? On what grounds can those theologians, who insist so strenuously upon the most literal interpretation of the one sentence, claim the right

to introduce a double metaphor into the other? There is nothing more inconceivable in the change of a silver or golden cup into a "covenant," than there is in the change of a piece of Bread into the Body of Christ. Those who think that the Cup is to be interpreted as meaning the Wine which is in it, and the "covenant" as meaning the Blood by which the covenant was consecrated, are somewhat inconsistent in complaining that there is irreverence, rationalism, unbelief, in venturing to think that the word "is" may affirm something different from "identity."

Nor does this exhaust the inconsistencies of the advocates of the literal interpretation. "Is," they say, must mean "is," and nothing else. The "Cup" does not mean the "Cup;" the "new covenant" does not mean the "new covenant;" common sense and the most obvious laws of language drive them to impose on these words other meanings; but the copula "is" affirms the "identity" of the subject and predicate. Here they take their stand; and they refuse to listen to any "evasion" of the obvious meaning of the word.

The subject is "this;" the predicate is "my Body." Do they mean to affirm that there is "identity" between these two things? "Our Lord," says Archdeacon Wilberforce, "does not speak of Bread at large, or Wine in general, but of '*this*,'—*i.e.*, of that which was consecrated or set apart." Conscious, however, that this very definite statement might involve the theory in serious difficulties, he adds:—

"No doubt His words had a further application; their ultimate reference was to the inward part, 'or thing signified,' which was the real object under consideration; but they had also an *indirect* relation to the outward and visible sign." *

The believers in the Real Presence appear to find as

* The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, p. 7.

great a difficulty with "Hoc" as the believers in Transubstantiation.* Archdeacon Wilberforce vacillates between the interpretation which refers it to the Bread, and the interpretation which refers it to the Body of Christ. On the whole, however, he appears to think that "this" denotes the Bread. The direct reference to the Body of Christ is implicitly rejected by him on a later page; for he says the identity between the subject and the predicate is not "a common case of physical identity, as when we handle portions of the visible creation, and say, 'this is iron,' or 'this is earth.'" To describe the identity predicated in the cases alleged, as "physical" is not, perhaps, very philosophical, but the meaning is clear; and the Archdeacon intended to say that when we hold a certain substance in our hands and say, "this *is* iron," we use the copula in a different sense from that in which Christ used it when holding the Bread in His hand, He said, "This *is* my Body."

Nor is it possible for the advocates of the Real Presence to contend that in these two expressions the copula has the same power, unless they deny that "this" denotes the Bread. The Bread, they acknowledge, remains Bread. It may be mysteriously united with the Body of Christ, but the Bread is one thing and the Body of Christ is another. The two may be as intimately one as the Humanity and the Divinity of our Lord; but to affirm the "identity" of the Humanity and the Divinity would be a flagrant heresy. Some other interpretation of the copula must be discovered.

* The writer of the Tract already quoted, distinctly rejects the reference of "*This*" to the Bread. "He was present under the sacramental 'forms,' and gave Himself to His disciples, saying, 'Take eat; this'—not the Bread, for the pronoun does not refer to 'Bread,' but to something which the Bread had become, and which our Lord held in His hand,—this compound. Whole consisting of the Sign and the thing signified, as the form of consecration enables us to recognize:—'This is my Body'" (p. 257). This might have passed, perhaps, if St. Luke and St. Paul had not told us that when our Lord took the cup, He said, "This *Cup* is the new testament in my Blood." Since the subject of the second sentence is the cup, it is difficult to see why the subject of the first sentence should be anything else than the Bread.

Archdeacon Wilberforce's solution of the difficulty is as curious as anything that can be found among the innumerable curiosities of theological controversy. He begins by maintaining that the copula affirms the "identity" of the subject and the predicate. He discovers that this is not "a common case of physical identity." He concludes that "since the relation between the subject and predicate in our Lord's words of institution cannot be resolved into any more general idea, it can derive its name only from itself, and the union can be described as nothing else than a *sacramental identity*." In other words, the Archdeacon informs us that the identity which exists between the Bread and the Body of Christ in the Sacrament, is—the identity which exists between the Bread and the Body of Christ in the Sacrament. This cannot be disputed; but most readers would be grateful for fuller information. Nor will it do for the advocates of this doctrine to reply, "It is a mystery." They profess to have a theory. If they believe that the "identity" of the subject and predicate in the words of institution cannot be denied without serious peril to the life of the Church, they are bound to tell mankind what they mean by this "identity."

It is very curious, too, that while those who believe in the Real Presence are disposed to be very severe upon other people for giving to the word "is" the meaning "represents" or "resembles"—a meaning which it very commonly bears—they themselves are obliged to assign to it a meaning which it bears nowhere else in Holy Scripture, and which it never bears in profane literature. "Wherein then," asked the Archdeacon, "does the identity consist? It is plainly a peculiar principle—*sui generis*; which, being without parallel in the world, is entitled to a specific appellation."

It is also curious, that in his account of this unique

"identity," the Archdeacon speaks of the "union" between The Bread and the Body of the Lord. He says, "The ancient writers speak of the *union* asmystical, or secret." But to predicate "union" is to deny "identity."

How then are we to interpret our Lord's words? We have just been told that they mean, this Bread and my Body are *identical*, but in a certain unique sense, which cannot be defined. And now we are told that they mean this Bread and my Body are, in a "mystical or secret" way, *united*. The two propositions are perfectly different. And whatever force there may be in objecting to the Protestant interpretation that "is" does not mean "represents" or "resembles," there is certainly much greater force in the objection to Dr. Wilberforce's interpretation that "is" does not mean "united with."

There is another difficulty involved in the "literal" interpretation. If the Bread became our Lord's Body at the Last Supper, and the Wine His Blood, His Body must have been "broken," and His Blood "shed," before His crucifixion. Nothing can be more explicit than our Lord's words—"This is my Body which is *broken* for you,"—"This Cup is the new testament in my Blood, *shed* for many for the remission of sins." To insist on interpreting the copula literally, and to refuse to accept the "literal interpretation" of the whole of the predicate, is flagrantly inconsistent. The "literal" interpretation requires us to believe that the atonement was consummated before our Lord hung on the cross; that He was slain before the "wicked hands" of His enemies touched Him; and that He died for the sins of the world before His agony in the garden, and His condemnation in the judgment-hall.

And what is the Body which is now "present" in the consecrated Bread, and the Blood which is now "present" in the consecrated Wine? Those who contend so

earnestly for the "literal" interpretation, ought to reply that it is the "broken" Body, and the Blood "shed" to atone for the sins of mankind. This is what our Lord states in the words of institution. This is plainly suggested by the appointment of two separate Elements for the Body and the Blood. This is not, however, what the advocates of the "literal" interpretation believe. They insist that it is the glorified humanity of our Lord which is given to communicants in the Eucharistic Elements.* It is difficult to see how they can deny that, according to their theory, the Body given to the faithful now is very different from the Body given to the Apostles by our Lord Himself, unless they are prepared to maintain that He was not only crucified, but glorified, the day before His passion, four days before His resurrection and six days before His ascension into heaven.

These are illustrations of the confusion into which we are plunged by the "literal" interpretation of the words of institution. "*This*" does not denote the Bread, when our Lord says, "This is my Body;" but it must denote the Cup, when He says, "This Cup is the new testament in my Blood." Or if in both cases the pronoun denotes the visible sign, then "is" does not mean "is," but means something which cannot be defined, or else means "is united with." In both cases, "the Body broken for you" does not mean the broken Body; and the "Blood shed for the remission of sins" does not mean the shed Blood.

The great discourse of our Lord's, recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, is also relied upon as an absolute demonstration of the doctrine of the Real Presence. Before, however, any use can be made of that

* "Our Lord's glorified Body, in virtue of its union with Deity, may be released altogether from relation to place, as He showed while on earth that it could be when He pleased. Its only relation to locality is that mysterious one formed by its sacramental conjunction with the outward sign in the Eucharist."—*Tracts for the Day*, p. 256. The transition from the "may be" of the first sentence to the "*is*" of the second, is very characteristic.

discourse in support of the mystery, it is obviously necessary to show that the discourse was intended to refer to the Eucharist. It has been very naturally objected, that the discourse was delivered before the Sacrament was instituted; and although this objection, taken alone, has no conclusive force, it is sufficiently grave to require an answer. Archdeacon Wilberforce attempts a reply. Referring to the objection, he says:—

“It proceeds on an entire forgetfulness of the peculiar character of St. John’s Gospel. When the beloved Apostle addressed himself to gather up the fragments which remained after his brethren had fallen asleep, it is obvious that his design was to illustrate those great doctrines, which he perceived to be the characteristic features of the Christian faith. These doctrines are especially three: the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity—the beginning and basis of all knowledge; the doctrine of our Blessed Lord’s Incarnation—the medium whereby Divine gifts were imparted to man’s nature; the doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments—the instruments, that is, whereby those treasures which have been stored up in the humanity of the Son of God are to be communicated to His brethren.”*

If it was part of the “design” of St. John’s Gospel to “illustrate” the doctrine of the Eucharist, it is, to say the least, very astonishing that he alone of the four Evangelists passes over the institution of the Rite in absolute silence.

Again Dr. Wilberforce asks:—

“Why should we be surprised, then, to find allusion [*i.e.*, in St. John’s Gospel] to that doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, which was the central point of the worship of Christians? And was it not rather to be expected that St. John would have added a caution, that this custom was not referred to, if our Lord’s words had no reference to a practice, which from the first occupied so large a part in the thoughts and attention of Christians.”†

Certainly there would be no reason to be “surprised” by an “allusion to the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist,” in St. John’s Gospel. Dr. Wilberforce is perfectly aware that the “surprise” has been occasioned by the fact that

* Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, p. 155.

† Ibid, p. 157.

St. John appears to say nothing about it. As for the "caution" which he thinks might have been expected in this sixth chapter,—would it not have been, on his hypothesis, quite as reasonable to expect that St. John would have said explicitly that the interpretation imposed on our Lord's words, by the people of Capernaum, was substantially right, and that His Flesh is really eaten and His Blood really drunk in the Lord's Supper? And if the discourse referred to the Eucharist, and was intended to teach that our Lord's actual "Flesh" is given to the faithful, such a statement was eminently necessary after the declaration of our Lord—"It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; *the words that I speak unto you*, they are spirit and they are life."

The grounds for supposing that our Lord was speaking of the Eucharist in this discourse, are supposed to be "greatly strengthened" by the alleged "prediction respecting the efficacy of Christian Baptism" in the conversation with Nicodemus.

"One difference, of course, existed between the cases—for whereas the Holy Eucharist was an ordinance wholly without precedent, Baptism, on the other hand, had been usual among the Jews. Nicodemus, therefore, expresses no wonder at the mention of water, though he was at a loss to understand how he could be born again; whereas our Lord's statement that He would give them His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink, surprised the Jews even more than the declaration that He was Himself the channel through which they were to receive heavenly grace. But as to the full nature and import of these holy Rites, it is manifest that one was as little understood antecedently to the institution of Christian Baptism, as the other was before the Lord's Supper."

The inference which is drawn from this is, that

"There can be no presumption drawn against the application of this chapter to the institution of the Lord's Supper, from the time when the doctrine was delivered, which would not equally militate against the

application of the third chapter to the Sacrament of Baptism: an application which is, notwithstanding, universally allowed.*

Passing over the extremely broad and unfounded statement that it is "universally allowed" that in His conversation with Nicodemus, our Lord referred to a Baptism not yet instituted—a statement which involves the conclusion that the Apostles never received the Baptism which is necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven—there is a much broader "difference" between "the cases" than the Archdeacon recognizes. What ground would there have been for finding in the conversation with Nicodemus the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, if our Lord had said nothing about "water," and had insisted only on the necessity of being born of the Spirit? Just as little ground is there for finding in the discourse, recorded in the sixth chapter, the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Eucharist, for our Lord says nothing about the Bread and the Wine.

No doubt the Fathers use the words of this discourse when they are speaking of the Eucharist; for our Lord is affirming the very facts and laws, as far as they can be affirmed in human language, which the Eucharist expresses far more effectively. But that the discourse and the Rite illustrate and affirm the same spiritual mysteries, is no proof that the discourse directly refers to the Rite. And that the Fathers *apply* the language of the discourse to the Rite, is no proof that they believed that the discourse directly refers to the Rite.

The declaration of Augustine is very distinct, "Credere in eum hoc est manducare panem verum. Qui credit in eum manducat."†

Authority failing,—the authority of Scripture, and the authority of the undivided Church ascertained in the

* The same argument for the reference of John vi. is given by Bellarmine. *De Sac. Euch.* part i. chap. v.

† Quoted by Jeremy Taylor. *Real Presence. Works*, vol. ix. p. 450.

creeds and decrees of the early Councils or in the writings of the early Fathers,—is there any process of theological argument by which this doctrine can be deduced from great truths universally admitted by Christian men? Can it be built up on the stable foundations of that common faith which underlies all the divisions of Christendom?

The attempt is made in the Tract which has been already quoted. Union with God is the perfection and glory of man's nature. For this great destiny man was originally created. He was taught to look beyond the bliss of Eden, to a nearness to God surpassing his conception. Even after the Fall, this sublime hope was not altogether extinguished. It shone with fitful brightness amidst the darkness of Paganism, and explains the fascination of all Pantheistic dreams of the ultimate absorption of the individual soul in the ocean of the Divine immensity. Man has sometimes striven hard to achieve the blessedness for which God made him; but by no self-originated force could he ever rise into union with God.

"At no time, either before the Fall or after it, could this union have been effected by the exercise of man's natural powers. No improvement or elevation of his faculties, no degree of moral excellence, could lead to an end so wholly supernatural. They might be the conditions required for its attainment, or the qualifications fitting for it, but the Gift itself must come from an external source. If man was to be united to God, the Divine Nature must in some way have come in contact with his; the unspeakable Gift must have been communicated, not acquired, the result of free grace, not of man's work."

These are the general premisses on which the argument is based, and they will be accepted, and accepted heartily, by the profoundest and most spiritual theologians of all Churches.

It is also contended that the great end of the Christian Redemption, is not simply to restore man to his original righteousness, but to that transcendent union with God

which would have crowned and consummated the persistent fidelity of the father of our race. God assumed human nature, that man might be made partaker of the Divine nature. The Incarnation has for its ultimate purpose the exaltation of all regenerate souls into mysterious and eternal union with God.

In all this there will be a very general agreement with the writer of the Tract. Nor will many refuse to go with him a step farther. He says :—

“As the Incarnate Son did not contract any relation to individuals of the human race by His assumption of their common nature, the glory He conferred upon it was only the exaltation of Humanity at large. Something more was needed to bring these transcendent blessings home to every single person of the Redeemed race. It was necessary that the Saviour should contract a personal relation to each of them. . . . As we inherit the evil and the loss from the first [Adam] by participation in his nature, so must we derive the restoration and the blessing from the Second by participating in His nature. *There must consequently be means by which this wondrous communication may be effected: and whatever these means are, they must necessarily be supernatural; for by supernatural means alone can we partake in that nature of our Incarnate Lord, which He hath exalted to the throne of God in Heaven.*”

It is unnecessary to criticise the theological assumptions in this extract, on which grave controversies have arisen; the main truth that “by supernatural means alone” can we be made partakers of the glorified nature of our Lord is indisputable.

Thus far, the argument has been elaborated with great care. It is perfectly coherent. It is instinct with life. But at this point all that can be called argument ceases. The path is wholly lost. The track ends; we are on the open hill-side at once, and with a precipice at our feet. Between the position to which the writer has brought us safely enough, that through “supernatural means alone” can human nature attain union with God in Christ, and the position that these “supernatural means” are the Sa-

craments, there is a wide gulf. He passes across it himself on the wings of bold assertion, but there is no Bridge of Logic by which we can follow him. There is not even the show of argument; and it is impossible, therefore, to give a refutation.

On his own principles, however, it may be shown that there is no necessary connection between the conceded truth, up to which he has worked his way with so much thoughtful labour, and the conclusion which is in dispute.

It is admitted that "it is not we who ascend up into heaven to bring Christ down from above. It is He who must come and unite Himself with us." But why should not the same Divine power which, according to the theory of the Real Presence, unites the Person of Christ with the consecrated Bread and Wine, act immediately on the soul of the communicant? Why are the Eucharistic Elements the necessary vehicle of its operation? "It has been said that Christ incarnates Himself in each worthy communicant, because He unites His Sacred Flesh to ours, and in a real and true sense makes Himself One with us." (Page 232.) This language is perilous; the framers of the Athanasian Creed would have recognized in it the seeds of heresy; but conceding the truth of what it is intended to affirm, why is it necessary that He should "first incarnate Himself in the hands of the priest?" * The Divine action on the soul may surely be direct and immediate.

When Ritualistic writers tell us that to deny their theory of the Real Presence, is to degrade the Lord's

* There is a reason alleged, but it is not a reason; it is only an attempt to show the spiritual expediency of this antecedent "impanation," for it is inaccurate to call it an "incarnation." "Lest this [the incarnation in the worthy communicant] should be thought to indicate only a subjective union, consequent upon the ardent faith and devotion of the receiver, there is an antecedent union altogether external to the communicant himself upon which the other is dependent." And yet, although the reception of the *res Sacramenti* is made independent of the faith of the communicant, the reception of the *virtus Sacramenti* is made dependent upon it. The "subjective" peril is, therefore, not eliminated.

Supper into the celebration of "an absent Lord," and to deprive the Service of all spiritual and supernatural power, they forget their own teaching on the efficacy of Baptism. Both the Sacraments are alleged to "unite us to the very Person of Christ Himself." "In Baptism we are made members of Christ; parts of His Sacred Body, 'even as if our flesh and bones were made continue with His.' We become 'children of God and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.'" (Pages 230, 231). "Baptism unites us to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit." (Page 234.)

But in the Water of Baptism there is no "Real Presence;" and yet the Rite is effectual. What propriety, then, can there be in such fervid language as the following:—

"No phantom body was given for our salvation, and no figure can convey to us the life of Jesus. The very necessities of the case—the needs of man and the purpose of the Eucharist, as carrying out the ends of the Incarnation—require the Real Presence of Christ with the means He has appointed for supplying those needs and carrying out those purposes." (Pages 244, 245.)

Is there, according to the Ritualistic theory of Baptism, anything of the character of a "phantom" in that Rite? Is it a mere "figure," because there is "no personal conjunction between the Water and the Spirit?" If the power of the Holy Ghost in the one Sacrament is exerted immediately on the soul of the recipient, why should it not be exerted in the other Sacrament in the same way? Does the writer of the Tract believe that men become less truly one with Christ in Baptism than in the Eucharist? If he does, let him tell us what solitary blessing is withheld in the first Sacrament which is given in the second. Are we not in his belief, made members, through Baptism, of the regenerate race of which Christ is the Head? And must not this distinction and blessedness come to us through that Sacred Humanity,

which is the channel of all grace and glory? If we are made partakers of the nature of Christ in Baptism, for which the "Real Presence" is not claimed, why is that "Presence" necessary in the Eucharist, in order that the Life already conferred may be strengthened and perfected? All the scornful words which are flung at the theory which refuses to recognize the union of Christ with the Bread and the Wine of the Eucharist, may be flung back by any one who chooses to do it, at the theory which refuses to recognize any union of the Holy Ghost with the Water of Baptism.

The consequences which are drawn from this doctrine it is unnecessary to discuss. If Christ is Personally Present in the Elements, it is a duty to bow before the consecrated Bread and Wine with wonder and reverence and awe. To the cold imagination of an English Nonconformist, the burning of incense and the lighting of candles may appear ignoble expressions of devout worship; but if it seems to any man that by these acts the transcendent mystery is more vividly recognized and more reverentially honoured, there is nothing to be said; and the history of Anglicanism during the last thirty years appears to demonstrate, that though the Tractarians were wiser than the Ritualists, in the caution with which they discussed this doctrine in their writings, the Ritualists are wiser than the Anglicans in their visible recognition of it in their worship. The theory is imperilled by exposing it too freely to the common light of the intellect; it is strengthened by surrounding it with whatever appeals to the imagination and the heart.

The theory of the Lord's Supper, commonly held by modern Evangelical Nonconformists, appears to be very different from that which was held by their theological and

ecclesiastical ancestors. The "Declaration of the Faith and Order owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England, agreed upon by their Elders and Messengers in their Meeting at the Savoy, October 12th, 1658," contains propositions on the Sacraments which would probably excite the suspicion and alarm of most of the Churches represented in the present "Congregational Union of England and Wales." The articles on the two Sacraments are almost identical with those in the Westminster Confession. They protest very firmly against Transubstantiation and the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, but give no sanction to the theory which seems to be generally accepted by modern Independents, and which represents Baptism and the Lord's Supper as having been instituted simply to perpetuate the memory of historical facts, to illustrate spiritual truths, to make an impression on the hearts of those who celebrate the Rites or who witness their celebration, and to afford an authorized symbolic expression of faith in Christ and brotherly love.

There are statements in the Savoy Declaration which the writer of this Essay would decline to accept; against the restriction which provides that neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper "may be dispensed by any but a minister of the Word lawfully called," he vehemently protests; but it appears to him that the general conception of the character and purpose of the Sacraments, professed by those who met at the Savoy, is very much truer and nobler than that which he imagines is ordinarily taught by modern Congregationalists.

The Sacramental theory of modern Congregationalists has been injuriously affected by their position and history. They have had to maintain a severe and protracted struggle against the errors which the Church of England has inherited from Rome, — errors which, notwithstanding all ambiguities, are strongly supported

by the Anglican Catechism and Baptismal Office, and which are not altogether absent from the Communion Service. Whatever conception of the Sacraments appeared to lend the very slightest sanction to these errors, they have come to regard with alarm. To retreat as far as possible from Roman superstition has appeared their only safety. But a theology developed under the influence of incessant anxiety to avoid giving any real or apparent advantage to hostile theories will certainly be impoverished; and the Nonconformist doctrine of the Lord's Supper has been seriously injured by the controversial interests which have controlled its formation.

It is instructive to observe how very little has been written by Nonconformist authors in illustration and defence of any positive doctrine on the Eucharist. They have written against the Romish theory. They have written against the Anglican theory. But no considerable treatise explaining and vindicating their own position, was produced by any of the great Independents of the Commonwealth; nor has any such treatise been produced by their successors. Dr. Halley, in his extremely able series of "Lectures on the Sacraments," has given almost all his strength to the controversies on Baptism. The five lectures on the Lord's Supper, although exhibiting a very definite doctrine, and containing a considerable amount of free and independent thinking, are the least valuable part of the book. Dr. Wardlaw, in his voluminous "Systematic Theology," does not devote a single lecture to either of the Sacraments, and contents himself with an incidental attack on the doctrine of Transubstantiation towards the close of a lecture on the second commandment. In Dr. Pye-Smith's "First Lines of Christian Theology,"—a work of inestimable value to the theological student,—the section on Baptism occupies

fifteen pages, and the section on the Lord's Supper occupies four.*

Dr. Pye-Smith defines a Sacrament as "a Divine institution, of universal obligation, for conveying to the minds and feelings of men, by some sensible substance and symbolical action, an impressive idea of the most essential blessings of redemption by the Messiah."† This definition, which represents the Ordinance as being mainly *didactic*, receives a very important extension in a subsequent paragraph, where it is said that Sacraments "are signs *confirmatory* of Divine truths and promises;—and instructive—"especially," it is added, "to men of inferior cultivation,"—a qualification which suggests the amazing theory that their utility, and therefore the obligation to celebrate them, will be gradually diminished by the diffusion of education.

The Lord's Supper is defined to be—

"I. A *religious festival*: generically resembling the sacrifice-feasts of the heathen (derived, no doubt, from a pure fountain of primeval Divine instruction), and of the worshippers of the true God.

"II. *Instituted by Christ*

"III. *Commemorative* . . . [in the sense apparently of being a permanent and 'irrefragable evidence' of the fact that Christ died and rose again.]

"IV. *Significant*, ex *instituto*: of

"(1) The spiritual life by the death of Christ produced and sustained.

"(2) Union to Christ, in receiving Him as Sovereign, Saviour, and Teacher,—rejecting all false religions,—

* Since writing this, I have observed that the Editor has a note to the effect, that he has incorporated with the section on Paptism the substance of a separate MS. on the meaning of βαπτίζειν and the proper mode of Baptism, and some Notes of a Sermon on Rom. vi. 4; but this does not make any substantial change in the accuracy of what is stated above; for it may be supposed that there was nothing which could be "incorporated" with the section on the Lord's Supper.

† Page 654.

acknowledging His people as our brethren,—binding ourselves by solemn covenant engagement.”*

It is very possible that in the oral lectures, of which the “First Lines” are but the syllabus, Dr. Smith developed his conception of the Lord's Supper as a religious festival, so as to include that *confirmation* of Divine truths and promises which he asserts to be one of the purposes for which Sacraments were instituted. But his general theory appears to be in harmony with the common Nonconformist opinion, that the design of the Lord's Supper is to perpetuate a symbolic declaration of the truth of certain doctrines, and of the reality of certain historical facts, and to give expression to the faith, devotion, and mutual affection of the communicants. There can be little doubt that modern Congregationalists, in their extreme dread of high sacramental doctrines, have drifted into pure Zwinglianism; it is possible that some of them have drifted farther still.

The most startling illustration of their present position is afforded by the contrast between the “Declaration of the Faith, Order, and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters,” adopted in 1833 by the Congregational Union of England and Wales, and the “Declaration,” already referred to, adopted at the Savoy in 1658. The modern document is not in any sense a creed. It is imposed on no Church. It is signed by no minister. It has nothing to do with “terms of Communion.” It claims, however, to be an historical statement of what the founders of the Union believed to be the common faith of English Congregationalists. The “Declaration” appears to affirm a theory of the Rite which excludes even the didactic conception of it, and leaves absolutely nothing in the Service but the expression of the subjective religious life of those who take part

* Page 674.

in it :—it is “to be celebrated by Christian Churches as a token of faith in the Saviour and of brotherly love.”

Contrast with this the theory of the Savoy Declaration:

“Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of Grace, immediately instituted by Christ to represent Him and His benefits, [*not to represent our faith and love.*] There is in every Sacrament a spiritual relation or fundamental* union between the sign and the thing signified. . . . The grace which is exhibited in or by the Sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; [*but there is grace conferred; and to “exhibit” does not mean merely “to show,” but “to administer,” or “impart;”*] neither does the efficacy of a Sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it; [*but there is efficacy—of which the modern “Declaration” says nothing,*] but upon the work of the Spirit and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.”

Again: “Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, called the Lord’s Supper, to be observed in His Churches unto the end of the world;” [*Why? As a token of faith in the Saviour, and of brotherly love? No, but*] for the perpetual “remembrance and showing forth of the sacrifice of HIMSELF in His death, the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with each other. . . . Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible Elements in this Sacrament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not

* This is the word given in the Declaration, as printed in Hanbury’s Memorials. The Westminster Confession reads “Sacramental.”

carnally and corporally but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified and all benefits of His death; the Body and Blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the Bread or Wine, yet as really but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that Ordinance, as the Elements themselves are to the outward senses."

No doubt there are very many Congregationalists who retain the substance of the Savoy theory, though they reject some of its details, and seldom use the technical phraseology in which it is expressed. It is still more certain that there are tens of thousands of Congregationalists, the actual attitude of whose souls at the Lord's Supper can be vindicated only by a theory very different from that of the later "Declaration;" their chief thought is not of professing their own "faith in the Saviour," and their "brotherly love;" they go to the table to receive, not to give. The spirit refuses to be restrained within the limits of a theory so narrow and bare. The heart is wiser than the intellect. And yet the poverty of the theory is mischievous.

It may indeed be suggested that what has been quoted from the modern document is a definition of the purpose for which the Rite is to be "celebrated," and that the eminent and devout men who drew up the "Declaration" would have greatly enlarged and enriched their account of the Sacrament, if they had proceeded to define the purposes for which it was "instituted." But the fact is, that whenever modern Congregationalists have attempted to develop a Sacramental theory, they have given almost exclusive prominence to the subjective view; and the result is, that both the Sacraments are in danger of being regarded as the unnecessary and incongruous encumbrances of a spiritual faith. If Baptism is nothing more than a ceremony in which children are "dedicated" to

God, the "dedication" may be quite as solemn and sincere without water as with. If the Lord's Supper is nothing more than a ceremony in which Christian men express their faith in Christ, and their love for each other, there are a thousand other modes in which this faith and this love may be expressed quite as emphatically as by eating Bread together and drinking Wine.

The root of the error lies in the habit of regarding Sacraments as forms of worship, and methods for expressing religious thought and feeling. What propriety is there in Baptism, if it is only a mode of professing faith in Christ? To recite a creed would be a much more significant act. That faith in Christ may be a condition of Baptism is quite possible; but that Baptism is in itself a profession of faith is inconceivable. Nor is it so regarded even by those who refuse to administer the Rite except to believers. They require the profession to be made before they administer the Rite. Baptism, moreover, is the act—not of the man whose faith is professed—but of another; the man himself only submits to it; if it were a profession of faith, the candidate should baptize himself. Or, if Baptism is nothing more than an act by which parents solemnly dedicate their children to God, why do not the parents themselves administer the Ordinance? The true instinct, even of those whose theory is wrong, has preserved them from the practices which would be the only consistent illustrations of the theory.

And what is the explanation of the conviction, deeply rooted in the minds of all Nonconformists, that there are but two Sacraments, and that the Church has no power to add to their number? If they are merely visible expressions of the religious thought and life—if Baptism is a symbolic act representing nothing more than the desire of parents to devote their children to God, or the personal trust of a believer in the Lord Jesus—if the

Lord's Supper is a Service representing nothing more than the faith and mutual love of the communicants—why should not other significant Rites be instituted to represent other religious acts and affections? New hymns are written and sung. New prayers are offered. New creeds are drawn up. Why should we not have new Sacraments too? We are free to express our religious life to the *ear* in new forms; why are we not free to express it in new forms to the *eye*? Why should any restraint be laid upon the multiplication of *visible* forms of worship, which is not laid upon the multiplication of *audible* forms of worship?

So long as the "subjective" conception of the Sacraments receives exclusive attention, the perplexity with which they are regarded by some devout and thoughtful persons is perfectly natural. No adequate and satisfactory explanation can be given of the purpose for which they were instituted. The religion of Christ would be complete without them. They have a technical and artificial appearance, which is inconsistent with the freedom and spirituality of the Christian Faith. If they are only expressions of religious thought and feeling, the Sacraments may be dispensed with, for we can express religious thought and feeling quite as naturally and effectively in other ways; or if they are observed, they will be observed in blind obedience to a positive enactment, not with that full and free consent of the whole soul which is the characteristic of Christian service.

Nor is the "didactic" theory, or the "impressive" theory much more satisfactory, though they are both considerably nearer to the truth than that which has just been discussed. Strip the Sacraments of their essential character, as *acts originating with God*, not with man, and can it be honestly said that they are very effective methods either of instruction or impression? Does not the conversation with Nicodemus, recorded by St. John,

teach the necessity of Regeneration—if *that* be the truth illustrated in the Rite—much more clearly than Baptism? And are not the sufferings and love of the Lord Jesus Christ much more vividly and “impressively” set before us in the narrative of the crucifixion, as given in any one of the Evangelists, than in the broken Bread and the Wine of the Eucharist? Even a hymn or a painting may produce a profounder “impression,” and a sermon or a book convey clearer “instruction,” than either of the Sacraments, if they are regarded simply as vehicles of instruction or instruments of impression.

It is impossible to conceive how the superstitious corruptions of both Ordinances, which began to appear in very early times, could have arisen at all, if the original conception of them gave exclusive prominence either to the “subjective,” the “didactic,” or the “impressive” element. No error can grow without a root. The very weeds reveal the quality of the soil. The Docetic denial of the humanity of our Lord is an unanswerable proof that the early Church could not have believed that He was merely a man. The immorality of the Corinthian Church, sheltering itself under the cover of Christian liberty, would have been impossible, if St. Paul had taught that we are justified by works. The argument drawn from the excesses of the same Church in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, against the Romish and Anglican theories of the Eucharist, is decisive. It is inconceivable that such excesses could have been committed by a Church, which had been taught that the consecrated Bread is supernaturally changed into the Body of Christ, and the consecrated Wine into His Blood.

It is, however, equally inconceivable that the Sacramental errors, which began to appear early in the second century, could have been developed from any such theory as that which is taught in the Congregational “Declara-

tion of Faith and Order." That theory affords no soil in which superstitious reverence for the Eucharist can take root ; and this is a proof that it could not have been the theory held by the Apostles. The Apostolic conception of the Lord's Supper did not render impossible the irregularities of the Church at Corinth, and must therefore have been very different from that of the Council of Trent and the Anglican Ritualists ; it did not render impossible the mysticism of Ignatius and Justin, and must therefore have been very different from that of the " Declaration of Faith and Order." In the original conception of the Service, as given in the New Testament itself, the Corinthian excesses and the Ignatian mysticism have their common origin and explanation.

The Lord's Supper was not instituted by the Church in honour of Christ ; it was instituted by Christ Himself. This fact alone suggests, though it does not prove, that its primary object could not have been to express the subjective religious life of the Church. He asked His disciples to eat Bread and drink Wine "in remembrance" of Himself. The lowest and poorest interpretation of these words will lead us to regard the Service as an expression of His intense love for His disciples, which made Him thirst to be remembered by them after His death. Not their love for Him, but His love for them, lies at the root of the Sacrament. But He could not have thought that they would actually forget Him ; nor was it the purpose of the Eucharist to prevent the memory of Christ from disappearing from the mind of the Church. We must look somewhat deeper for His meaning.

On the evening preceding the crucifixion the strength and tenderness of His affection for His disciples were revealed as they had never been revealed before. It was the last time that He and they were to be together before

His death. The relations which had existed between Him and them during the two or three years of His public ministry were coming to an end; when renewed, they would be renewed in another form. The "great depths" of His heart were "broken up." His human friends had been true to Him; He had been solaced by their affection; they were to endure in coming years sorrow, shame, and death in His service; and He clung to them with a love which was passionate, though calm. He and they had been living together; they had sat together in many synagogues; they had walked together over the hills of Galilee; they had slept under the same roofs; they had been weary together, hungry together, thirsty together; they had eaten and drunk together; His sorrows had been theirs and His joys. Would they, when He had ascended into heaven, feel that He had passed out of their reach, and that it was presumptuous for them to think of maintaining anything of the intimacy and freedom of their earthly intercourse with Him?

He cannot endure the thought of this. To whatever glory He was destined, He wishes those who had been His friends on earth to think of themselves as His friends still, and not merely as His servants. He does not desire them to forget the months and years during which He had appeared to be almost one of themselves. He asks to be "remembered" by them, not in connection with the great displays of His supernatural power—His walking on the sea, His stilling the storm, His raising the dead—but in connection with that evening of sorrow, weakness, and love. That He should institute a religious Service in which they were to "do" what they had done in the upper chamber, where He washed their feet and supped with them, was plainly a declaration on His part that vast as was the distance which was soon to separate them, the freedom of their mutual

affection was to be permanent. They were still to sit at His table, and from that table He would never be absent. When Christ had ascended to the right hand of God, and the full glory of His Divine nature had been revealed to the Apostles, it is certain that they could never have thought of the Lord's Supper as being nothing more than a Service in which they might express their affection for Him and for each other; it was an enduring witness to them that the same trustful and generous love, which Christ had shown them when He was on earth, dwelt in His heart still—He was as near to them as He had ever been.

Nor was the Eucharist a revelation of the love of Christ to the Apostles only. Rightly interpreting His mind, which was perhaps more fully disclosed to them after the resurrection, whoever became a Christian was invited to sit down with them at the table of the Lord. They did not claim for themselves any exclusive privilege or blessedness. Their own relations to Christ were not closer than those of the humblest and obscurest of their converts. Their Master's love for them was not different in kind from His love for men who might have cried, "Crucify Him," when Pilate was willing to let Him go, but who afterwards repented and confessed that He was the Christ of God. None of the "friends" of Christ were to be excluded from His table; and when they were there, all the transient and accidental differences which might separate them elsewhere disappeared. To acknowledge any distinction between rich and poor, between those who have just received the pardon of Christ for a protracted life of shameful sin, and those who have served Him with courageous fidelity from their very youth, would be a violation of the whole spirit of the Service. It is the Lord's table, not man's, and at His table all the guests are equal. To preserve any privilege or prero-

gative for church officers—to deny the Cup to the “laity”—to make the sanctity of the Service dependent upon the presence of any but Christ—this was what the Apostles never dreamt of. “The Cup of blessing which *we*”—all of us—“bless, is it not the communion of the Blood of Christ?” The Service brings the soul into a Presence in which the greatness of Apostles themselves disappears.

Nor does lapse of time or distance from the original scene of its celebration impair its power. Even we who live in these remote lands and ages are as near to Christ as those who were with Him on the night before His death. We, too, sit at the table. The Bread is broken for us. The Cup passes from their hands to ours. The words of infinite and pathetic affection which came that night, not merely from our Lord’s lips, but from the very depths of His soul, are addressed to us as well as to the Apostles. We, too, are “not servants but friends.”

How much this Service actually did to develop the idea and the spirit of brotherhood in the early Church cannot be estimated. No preaching could have been so effective. Men knew that Christ Himself invited them to sit at His table, and hostilities of race, national jealousies, envy and contempt arising from social distinctions, all vanished. They were all His guests and “friends;” Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, master and slave, forgot the differences by which they were separated in their common blessedness and their common glory.

The celebration of the Supper was a time for gladness. When Christ Himself and His Apostles broke Bread and drank Wine in the upper chamber, there was fear, there was gloom, there was perplexity in every heart but His; and though in His heart there was peace, the darkness which might be felt was already deepening around Him.

But when He had risen from the dead, His promise was fulfilled, and their "sorrow" was "turned into joy." "Then was their mouth filled with laughter and their tongue with singing." The awful gloom, the mystery, the dread, with which for centuries the Service has been invested, were unknown. There was overflowing thankfulness and delight that what had seemed to be the ruin of the world had proved its salvation, and that what had appeared to be the defeat of Christ had proved His most glorious victory. The Supper was regarded—and properly regarded—as a festival; those who celebrated it were radiant with joy and triumph. It was this conception of it which rendered possible the excesses of the Corinthian Christians.

But there is another conception of the Rite, which the Corinthian Churches had forgotten, and of which they had to be sharply and sternly reminded. "The Cup of blessing which we bless" is "the communion of the Blood of Christ;" "the Bread which we break" is "the communion of the Body of Christ." St. Paul reminds them of this, when He is rebuking them for abusing their Christian liberty by attending feasts in honour of idols; they "cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." In condemning their excesses in the celebration of the Eucharist itself, he recalls to their memory the words of institution; and on these words he rests his denunciation of their profanity, and his threatenings of the penalties with which it would be avenged—penalties from which some of them had already suffered. It is necessary, therefore, to return to the consideration of what the words of institution mean.

That when our Lord took Bread and brake it, and said, "Take, eat: *this* is my Body which is broken for you," He was understood to mean that the Bread had in any sense become His Body, is as inconceivable, as that He

was understood to mean that the Cup had in any sense become the New Covenant, when He said, "This cup is the New Covenant in my Blood." That St. Peter, who, in his reverence for Christ, had just before hesitated to permit Him to wash his feet, should have taken the Bread and eaten it without a word, if he had thought that it had been changed into the Body of Christ, is incredible. But such an interpretation of our Lord's language could never have occurred to the Apostles. There He sat before them. His Body was not broken. His Blood was not shed. Every sense bore testimony that the Bread was Bread, and that the Wine was Wine. That the substance of either had been changed while its accidents remained, or that as the result of consecration either had become something else though it remained what it was before, could never have occurred to the peasants and fishermen to whom our Lord's words were addressed.

All this, however, it may be said, is bare assertion, and different minds will have different impressions of how the Apostles were likely to interpret our Lord's declaration, and of how they were likely to receive any startling truth. But it is further to be observed, that there is no trace in the Acts of the Apostles of any astonishment being created among Christians themselves, or among their enemies, by this transcendent mystery. The Apostles are brought before public tribunals, Jewish and Pagan, but they are never questioned about a practice which misapprehension and slander were certain to transform into a revolting crime. A generation or two later—as soon, that is, as mysticism introduced into the language of the Church those expressions on which the believers in Transubstantiation and the Real Presence rely—dark suspicions arose; malignity and ignorance gave the grossest interpretation to what the

Christians said about eating the Body and drinking the Blood of One who had died for them. But in the history of the earlier years of the Church, no such misapprehensions appear.

It is also certain that, had the words of our Lord been understood by the Apostles as predicating a supernatural change in the Eucharistic Elements, either the doctrine of Transubstantiation or the doctrine of the Real Presence would have been taught by the writers of the post-Apostolic age with a distinctness and definiteness which neither Roman Catholic nor Ritualistic controversialists would venture to claim for the few and meagre passages which they quote in support of their respective theories. This was not a fact which, after it had been once asserted, was likely to be ever forgotten. If the Bread which the Churches ate at least every Lord's Day, had been believed by the Apostles to be the actual Body of Christ, the mystery would have been asserted and re-asserted by the early Christian writers in a manner which would have left us in no uncertainty about their faith. There would have been no vacillation. Every statement that referred to the Rite would have been unambiguous and firm.

But what is still more conclusive against both the Romish and Ritualistic interpretation of our Lord's words, is the fact that in the New Testament the Bread is called Bread even after consecration. The Ritualists rely very much on this argument in their controversy with Romanists; and they support it by showing that the Fathers speak of the continued existence of the Elements in their natural substance. They do not see that the argument is almost as fatal against their own theory as against the theory of Rome. Is it conceivable that the early Church could have spoken of the consecrated Element as Bread, if they had believed that, though its natural substance remained, it had become the Body of the Lord?

Surely the invisible Presence would have so transfigured its mere material vesture, that the existence of the visible substance would have ceased to be recognized. It was the common habit of the Apostolic Churches to speak of coming together "to break Bread;" no such expression could have arisen, or, if it had arisen, could have lasted, had it been the common belief that the Bread in any sense actually became Christ—His very Body with which His Soul and Divinity are inseparably united.

And when St. Paul was moved to anger and sorrow by the excesses of the Corinthian Christians, the doctrine of the Real Presence, had he believed it, would certainly have impressed its form on his condemnation of their sin. "As often," he says, "as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Why did he not strike them with horror by telling them that, in the Supper which they profaned, they received the Body and the Blood of Christ? "Whosoever," he continues, "shall eat this Bread and drink this Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord." Why did he speak of the Bread at all, if what they ate had become something infinitely more awful than the mere sign of Christ's Body? Why did he speak of the "Cup of the Lord," if what they drank had become something infinitely more awful than the mere sign of His Blood? To answer, that though the Elements had become the Body and Blood of Christ, they remained Bread and Wine still, is no reply to this argument. At such a crisis, had the Apostle believed in the mysterious and supernatural union of the material symbols with the Person of Christ—"a kind of hypostatical union of the sign and the thing signified so united together as are the two natures of Christ," *—it is inconceivable that the tremendous weapon against profanity

* Tract, p. 233.

which this faith supplies should not have been used. He believed that the consecrated Bread was Bread, and nothing more. He believed that the consecrated Wine was Wine, and nothing more.

The weakness of the extreme Protestant position lies in this—that to interpret our Lord's words when He instituted the Service, as meaning "This Bread *represents* my Body," leaves upon the mind an impression of dissatisfaction. That the Bread was broken and distributed to the Apostles with a simply "didactic" purpose—that the whole Rite is only a visible memorial of the death of Christ—is a theory which has never yet been able to lay a firm hold on the mind of any considerable section of the Church. The Service is felt to be an "act," not simply a "picture-lesson." To invest it with the nature of an act, it has been spoken of by Congregationalists as "a *token* of faith in the Saviour, and of brotherly love," as though the Rite had been founded by the Church as an expression of its own life, instead of having been founded by our Lord Himself.

That the Bread is a symbol of Christ's Body, and only a symbol, is true; that the Wine is a symbol of Christ's Blood, and only a symbol, is true. But it does not follow that when our Lord said, "This is my Body," and "This is the New Covenant in my Blood," He meant to declare the symbolic character of the Elements.

Our Lord "took Bread," because Bread is the chief support of our natural life, and is, therefore, the fittest symbol of that which supports our spiritual life. "He brake it," because it was by the crucifixion of His Body that He was to become the Life of the world. But when He said, "Take, eat, this is my Body," He meant to do something more than merely explain what he had been doing. He meant that He gave Himself to His

disciples in giving them the symbols of Himself. He, therefore, names the Divine gift, and not merely the material symbols of the gift.

The Lord's Supper is something more than a scenic representation of the breaking of Christ's Body and the shedding of His Blood. In our reception of the Elements there is something more than a scenic representation of the truth that through His death the life of our souls is sustained. It does not correspond to a coronation acted in a theatre, but to the crowning of a king in Westminster Abbey.

Turretin states the truth concerning both the Sacraments with his usual clearness and force, when he declares them to be, "Non signa merè *theoretica*, quæ nihil aliud faciunt quam rem repræsentare et significare, cujus signa sunt; sed *practica*, quæ non tantum significant, sed et obsignant et re ipsa exhibent. Nam etsi signa sint theoreticè significantia, . . . in hac tamen significatione theoretica non subsistunt, sed habent præterea significationem practicam, tum obsignativam, tum exhibitivam suo modo et sensu rei significatæ, ut clavis traditio habet significationem practicam immissionis in possessionem eamque obsignat et exhibet."*

Had the Rite been simply *theoretic*, to use Turretin's word, our Lord would doubtless have said to the Apostles, "This *represents* my Body." But as He meant to give them, in a symbolic act, all that His death secured for them, He said, when He distributed the Bread, "This *is* my Body." What He gave them with His hands was nothing; He was not thinking of that. He was thinking of the diviner gift.

There ought to be no difficulty in understanding that though the material Elements are only symbols, the act of Christ when he places these Elements in our hands is a

* Turr., Loc. xix. Quæ. iii.

spiritual reality. A key, to use Turretin's illustration, which has done good service in this controversy, is a very natural symbol of possession; but when the commander of a city hands the keys of the gates to the general of a besieging army, he does something more than perform a mere "didactic" ceremony;—by the surrender of the visible symbol, he surrenders the city itself. A book is a natural symbol of the occupations and duties of the head of a religious house, and a staff of the duties of a bishop or shepherd of the flock; but when a book is placed in the hands of a man elected abbot, and a staff in the hands of a man elected bishop, the act is not intended simply to give the abbot and the bishop symbolic instruction as to their future duties, it is intended actually to convey to them, by a visible and impressive ceremony, the duties and responsibilities of their office.

It is this aspect of the Service which seems to be obscured by the extreme Protestant theory. In the eagerness with which Protestant controversialists have maintained that the Bread and Wine are only symbols, it has been forgotten that if they are symbols, they symbolize something. Such exaggerated attention has been concentrated on the visible signs, the truth has been reiterated with such earnestness that the signs are only signs, that we have come to think that the Service has no spiritual value. It is time that we remembered Who it was that instituted the Rite, and what He Himself said when He distributed the Elements.

If it had been instituted by ourselves to commemorate Christ, the whole Service and not the Elements alone, would have been merely symbolic. To recur to the old illustration: if a soldier in the ranks of a besieging army hands a great key to his own general, the *act* is symbolic as well as the *key*. It is simply the expression of the confidence and hope of a man having no authority to sur-

render the city, that the city will soon be taken. It is a mere dramatic ceremony. We can imagine circumstances in which it would be very effective; circumstances in which it would stir the courage and fire the ardour of those who had become weary of the siege; but its whole value and force would lie in its effect upon the imagination and emotions of those who witnessed it. But when the governor of the city does the same thing, the act is a mere dramatic ceremony no longer. Its value does not lie in the impressiveness and scenic solemnity with which it may be accompanied. It represents a real transfer of power. And so when Christ gives us Bread, and says, "This is my Body," it is not a mere dramatic ceremony—deriving all its worth from its "didactic" meaning or its "impressive" power. His Body is actually given. "The Bread which we break" is "the Communion of the Body of Christ." "The Cup of blessing which we bless" is "the Communion of the Blood of Christ." The Elements are the key surrendering possession of the city; the book conferring his dignity on the abbot; the staff transferring authority to the bishop; the ring ratifying the vow of marriage; the "seal," to use the language of our fathers, of the covenant of grace.

With this conception of the Service, it is possible to account for the mysticism and superstition which gathered about it in very early times. It justifies all the various expressions used of the Rite in the New Testament. It gives an adequate meaning to the words of institution. It rescues the great Christian Ordinance from the merely technical character with which it is regarded by many Protestants, and inspires it with life and power. It is a protection against the superstitions of Rome.

To state what may be properly called the *doctrine* of the Eucharist, to interpret the mysteries it reveals to all

devout souls, is impossible. Perhaps if it were possible to develop in formal propositions the spiritual truths which underlie the appropriation of the Elements to their wonderful purpose, one great use of the Rite would disappear. It is partly because these truths cannot be expressed in propositions that they are expressed in symbols. Who can explain what is meant by the Death of Christ becoming the Life of all who receive Him? Who can define the relation existing between the Christian soul and its Lord? The Bread broken, distributed, eaten, tells us what is left untold after theological science has exhausted all its resources.

There is one obvious element of significance in the use of Wine as the symbol of that Blood, by which the New Covenant is established between God and man, which has been almost lost. For centuries the Eucharist has been celebrated not only with awe but with anguish. The most devout and saintly souls have thought that it became them to receive the symbols of their Saviour's Passion with bitter sorrow and humiliation. And nothing can be more natural. The Service recalls the torture, shame, and woe which Christ endured for our salvation—the nails, the crown of thorns, the thirst, the intense desolation, the awful descent into the darkness of death. But did not our Lord anticipate the distress, and the keen self-reproach, which the remembrance of His sufferings would be certain to awaken; and does He not ask us to forget the agony by which he reconciled us to God, in the joy of reconciliation? What else is the meaning of the Cup? By His own appointment, the very symbol of all earthly gladness stands for the Blood which was “shed for the remission of sins.” If He had meant us to “afflict our souls” at the Supper, He would surely have given us the “bitter herbs” of the old Passover. But it is a Festival to which He invites us, and with pathetic

anxiety that the strong tide of "joy for pardoned guilt" should rise in our hearts like a flood, and prevent us from yielding to the natural impulse which leads us to "mourn that we pierced the Lord," He gives us Wine.

And though the Bread is broken and the Wine poured out in remembrance of His death, we rejoice that He is "alive for evermore." We meet "around a table, not a tomb." Anglican theologians derive an immense, but illegitimate, advantage from the way in which their theory is commonly described. It is implied that all other Protestant theories deny the "Real Presence" of Christ in the supreme Rite of the Christian Faith. This implication we passionately resent. Christ is present at His table, though not in the Bread and Wine which are placed upon it. He is there—as a Host with His guests. We do not meet to think of an "absent" Lord, or to commemorate a dead Saviour. We receive the Bread from His own hands, and with it all that the Bread symbolizes. We drink the Cup in His presence, and rejoice that we are His friends—that through His Blood we have received "remission of sins," and that we "have peace with God" through Him. He is nearer to us now than He was to those who heard from His lips the words of institution. It was "expedient" for us that He should go away; for He has come again, and by the power of His Spirit we abide in Him and He in us. In being made partakers of Christ, we are "made partakers of the Divine nature," and become for ever one with God.

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH.

BY THE

REV. HENRY ALLON.



THE WORSHIP

OF

THE CHURCH.

WORSHIP is the instinctive act and necessity of the religious consciousness. Its root lies in our recognition of God, and of our personal relationship to Him, its eucharistic element in our sense of His transcendent excellencies, and its supplicatory element in our consciousness of absolute dependence upon Him. We do not, that is, worship in mere compliance with a Divine injunction, nor in conformity with a conventional cultus, nor as a means of religious benefit. We worship under the impulse of our own religious instincts, because, the constitution of our nature being what it is, we cannot without violence to it help doing so. Worship, therefore, has its ultimate reason neither in the sense of obligation, nor in considerations of utility ; it is the simple necessity of the religious soul. Hence, in the severest persecutions of the Church, no considerations of personal peril have ever been sufficient to deter Christian men from assembling for social worship. Although there is no direct injunction of public worship, and although the spiritual relationships of the soul are so personal, and

find their full expression in acts of personal and private devotion, yet the constraining impulse of social worship has led men for the sake of it to dare and sacrifice life itself.*

The forms and expressions of our worship are manifold, and are variously determined. Personal worship has its reason in the instinct of personal religious life, and in the further instinctive feeling that He who made us capable of worshipping Him, yearns for our worship and rejoices in it. Social worship has its reason in that instinct of human fellowship which prompts us to associate in the expression of all common feelings, and in the pursuit of all common interests. The natural instinct which prompts the expression of strong emotion towards God, also prompts its expression towards men. We always seek embodiment for inward feeling ; —the eloquence of emotion is always more passionate than that of mere intellectual conviction. Christian worship is the result of special theological teaching. The worshipping instinct finds expression according to its intelligence ; the form and sentiment of which are determined by our knowledge of the true nature and purposes of the Deity.

In its supreme, religious sense, worship can be offered only to the absolute God. We may reverence in subordinate beings qualities superior to our own, and do them homage or worship. We may recognize and admire in them abilities and possessions which might be of great advantage to us, and address to them requests, or prayers ; but, in the sense of absolute adoration and dependence, our feelings of worship can be expressed only towards the Supreme God.

Idolatry contradicts this fundamental principle of worship in two ways : it directs the feeling of worship

* Wilberforce, on the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, chap. xii.

to inferior objects, which thus become false gods, to which adoration and prayer are offered;—this is the ultimate and grossest form of idolatry. Or, it approaches the true God in a false and incongruous way; such, for instance, as the employment of material symbols for the representation of spiritual things, as in the worship of the golden calf by the Israelites, and in the image-worship of the Romish Church. In portentous approximation to this is the so-called “Real Presence” in the material bread and wine of the Sacramentarian Eucharist. In this form of idolatry the boundary-line of legitimate symbolism is passed, and the material is potentially connected with the spiritual. Such is the universal genesis of the grosser forms of idolatry.

Christian worship differs from Jewish, Mohammedan, and Unitarian worship, in its recognition of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as proper objects of direct adoration and prayer.

This is not the place for vindicating such recognition, either by an exposition of the Christian conception of the triune nature of the one supreme Deity, or by any demonstration of the proper Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. The question is necessarily one of pure revelation. We can only refer any who might join issue with us upon this great preliminary Christian dogma, to the polemics of the Church on the subject in almost every age of its existence.*

* To such controversies of the ancient Church, for example, as the Ebionite, Patripassian, Sabellian, Arian, Apollinarian, Nestorian, Monophysite, Monothelite, &c., as recorded in the ordinary Church histories, especially in Neander's General History of the Christian Religion and Church, and still more fully in Dorner's great work on The History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ;—to such polemical works of English theologians as Bishop Bull's *Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*, in the seventeenth century; the controversial works of Dr. Priestly and Bishop Horsley, Samuel Clark and Bishop Waterland, in the eighteenth century; and in our own day to the two great Christological works of Dr. Pye-Smith and Mr. Liddon. The former, *The Scripture Testimony to the Messiah*, an exhaustive and unanswerable exegesis of Scriptural proofs of the Divinity of our Lord; the latter, *The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, a statement of the general evidence and argument in their application to modern forms of thought, equally able and conclusive.

The direct address to our Lord Jesus Christ of adoration and prayer is the logical sequence and necessity of His recognized Divinity,—only an Arian hypothesis could restrict worship to an approach to the Father *through* the Son. Prayer to Christ is abundantly justified by Apostolic doctrine, precept, and practice; it has been the custom of the Church from the Apostolic age until now. The various heresies concerning the person of Christ that have agitated the Church are only proofs of the normal doctrine and practice. There is no formal exposition of the primitive doctrine,—no formal record of the commencement of the practice. It was the spontaneous and unquestioned impulse of the first disciples. In some way or other the Prophet of Galilee wrought in their minds and hearts the singular conviction that He was the true God, and that it was fitting to offer to Him direct homage and prayer; and with exceptions so few as scarcely to be of account in a general characterization, this has been acquiesced in by the uniform conviction and practice of the Christian Church. The wonderful and unique characteristics of the Incarnation,—the Divine humanity of our Lord, at once perfect God and perfect man, full not only of Divine power, but of ideal human excellence, of perfect holiness, manifold experience of actual human life, unspeakable love, self-sacrifice and sympathy,—constitute the grand peculiarity of Christian revelation, which appeals resistlessly to all the necessities and feelings of sinful, struggling men, and makes worship inevitable. So perfect, and in its unique combinations so marvellous and precious is this adaptation, that the religious enthusiasm which it excites is stronger than considerations of dogmatic consistency, and would probably prevail largely, even were the philosophy of the Incarnation altogether at fault.

Historically, as in other respects, the cultus of the Virgin

in the Greek and Roman Churches stands in striking contrast to the cultus of Christ and of the Holy Spirit ; not only is it destitute of primitive evidence, the Scripture evidence militates directly against it. It is the result, chiefly of two causes : first, its dogma has been slowly and sedulously formulated by a growing superstition and carnality in the Church ; next, it has been facilitated by polemical perversions of great truths concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, beginning, perhaps, with the Nestorian controversy, which was the first preparation for the cultus of the Virgin. These diminished, in the hearts of Christian disciples, that sense of the human nearness and sympathy of our Lord, to produce which was one of the great purposes of the Incarnation, and which, in the Apostolic writings, is insisted upon as among its chief practical blessings. Such controversies about our Lord's nature, ending, even when the conclusion was most orthodox, in metaphysical propositions and formulated creeds, tended to make the doctrine of our Lord's person a theory of belief rather than a practical religious fellowship ; and thus He was removed to a distance from the daily life of men ; His true human brotherhood, so precious to tempted, struggling, suffering humanity, became a doctrine to be defined and fought over, rather than a sympathy to be felt and rejoiced in. He was conceived of either as imperfectly Divine or imperfectly human, or else as a mere historical personage whose peculiar ministry was restricted to His actual life upon earth. Either He lived upon earth under conditions of Divine exemption which made Him no proper brother or example to us, or under conditions so temporary that after His ascension they practically ceased. Whatever thus tended to remove from the practical life of men the human brotherhood and sympathies of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether polemical theology or mystical supersti-

tion, left a blank in human hearts which the new dogma of Mary was gradually constructed to fill. How far the development of this dogma has really been carried in the Romish Church, how nearly if not how entirely the Virgin has been exalted to a place of honour and worship which is absolutely Divine, may be seen by readers not familiar with Roman Catholic writings in the instances which Dr. Pusey has collected in his "Eirenicon;" and that the tendency to annihilate all incongruity and restriction in her recognition as Divine is undiminished, is manifest from the recent formulating of the Immaculate Conception into an authoritative dogma; and from the proposal to decree likewise, in the Œcumenical Council now sitting, her bodily assumption into heaven. It almost startles one, to see how complete a parody of the great facts and truths connected with our Lord Jesus Christ is thus attempted. Christ is removed from His immediate relations of perfect humanity, as too holy for our direct approach to Him, and the Virgin is put into His place. Strange that it is not seen that the tendency of all this is to correct itself. The womanly nearness and tenderness, which to those ignorantly or thoughtlessly unmindful of our Lord's humanity, made the cultus of the Virgin so popular, are necessarily diminished, just in proportion as she is exalted to the absolutely Divine; lacking, moreover, as such imaginations do and must, the subtle and wonderful harmonies that are presented to us in the Incarnation of our Lord. It is the difference between mechanism and life. It is a human imitation of Divine things. Neither by his skill of hand nor his subtlety of thought can man produce the living works of God.

Save in the semi-reformed Establishment of England—which from the beginning has retained many elements in close affinity with the corrupt doctrines and worship

of the Church of Rome, never more boldly or portentously vaunted than now—the Protestant Churches of Great Britain have never evinced the least taint of Mariolatry. The worship of the Virgin, and the Intercession of Saints, are conceptions which they have ever most utterly repudiated, and now with a vehemence corresponding to their bold assertion.

The only sufficient preservative from them is the clear and unstinted realization of the humanity of our Lord, in its wonderful fulness of human experience and sympathy. In His nature, rightly conceived, all that is tenderest in woman blends with all that is noblest in man. He is not so much man incarnate as humanity incarnate, or, as it has been somewhat boldly expressed, He is man and woman both. They who realize the fulness and tenderness of His human sympathy, will feel no craving for either the sympathy or intercession of Virgin or saint. He is nearer to us, and more to us, than any other can be.

In speaking, for our present purpose, of the principles and modes of Christian worship, it is necessary to distinguish its two great constituent elements, respectively designated Praise and Prayer:—the ascription that our adoration brings, and the requests that our necessities urge. Both are acts of approach to the supreme God, both are recognitions of His Divine supremacy and glory, both are exercises of deep religious life; but in conception and feeling they differ from each other in important respects.

Praise is the very highest mood and exercise of the religious soul; it is the expression towards God of the holiest emotions of which we are capable—reverence, obligation, gratitude, love, adoration. Whenever these are uplifted to God in admiration and homage, there

is the worship of praise—the highest and most perfect expression of all that is purest and noblest in our religious nature. As contrasted with the worship of prayer, the worship of praise is manifestly transcendent. Prayer is the pleading of our human indigence and helplessness; praise is the laudation of Divine excellency and sufficiency. Prayer supplicates the good that God may have to bestow; praise is the adoration of the good that there is in God Himself. When we pray we are urged by necessities, fears, and sorrows,—it is the cry of our troubled helplessness, often of our pain or our terror; we are impelled by feelings of unworthiness, memories of sin, yearnings for forgiveness and renewal. Praise brings, not a cry, but a song,—it does not ask, it proffers,—it lifts, not its hand, but its heart,—it is the voice not of our woe, but of our love, not of beseeching, but of blessing. It comes before God not clothed in sackcloth, but with its “singing robes” about it, not wailing litanies, but shouting hosannas. Prayer expresses only our lower religious moods of necessity and sorrow; praise expresses our higher religious moods of satisfaction and joy. Prayer asks God to come down to us; praise assays to go up to God. The soul that prays falls prostrate with its face to the ground, often being in an agony; the soul that praises stands with uplifted brow and transfigured countenance ready to soar away to heaven. Moreover, the instinct of praise in the religious heart is deeper than that of prayer; song in the human soul is earlier, and will be later, than supplication. Prayer is the accident of our present sinful necessity; praise is the essence of all religious life and joy. The birth-place and home of prayer is on earth. The birth-place and home of praise is in heaven.

The worship of praise, therefore, is the supreme act of intercourse between God and the creature. We gather

into it all the elements of our complex nature,—our intellect, conscience, religious emotion, and physical faculty,—and engage them in a great religious service; and thus we realize the noblest fellowship with the Creator that is possible to a creature. In other ways also we have fellowship with God; in prayer, when we come to Him to ask the supply of our need; in meditation, when we muse upon His excellencies, or rest in the quiet assurance of His love; and in service, when we enter into His purposes, and as “workers together with God” consecrate ourselves to the accomplishment of them; but in praise, our fellowship with God is far higher than in any other; the personal want that prompts prayer is forgotten; the anxious thought that ponders Divine mysteries is banished; the strenuous toil that wearies even the consecrated hand is suspended; and we lift up the face of our worship to the light and glory of God’s great love. Absorbed and blessed in the sense of His Divine excellencies, we stand before Him as the angels do; our reverence and love are quickened into adoring rapture, and we utter our reverent estimate of what He is, in the largest and most rapturous words that we can find. Such worship God graciously accepts: all natures that love crave love, and the loving God supremely craves the love of His creatures. Else would our worship be chilled, and driven back into our own hearts. We speak to Him our admiration and praise, because He graciously listens to it, and joyously accepts it. We look up with gladness into the face of our Father in heaven, because He responds to our loving rapture with His,—His Divine heart answers the love of our poor human hearts,—“God is love,” and He *seeketh* loving souls to worship Him.

Further, we ourselves are more blest in the offering of praise, than we can be in any answer to prayer, just as

we are more blest in the love of a friend than in any gift that he may bestow. Even in our intercourse with God, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," more blessed for our love to be accepted by His love, than for His love to bestow benefactions upon our need.

Hence the true inspiration of praise is derived from God, not from ourselves. It is not found in downward pondering thought concerning our own nature and necessities, but in upward aspiring thought concerning Him; the thought of self swallowed up in the thought of God; the feeling of our great need lost in the feeling of His great glory. It is this which makes the "gate" of praise the very "gate of heaven;" and as we throng and press around it, we have close affinities and fellowship with those who have entered it; our songs blend with the songs of the redeemed before the throne.

In the form of it, praise may be either silent or vocal. Its essence is the emotion of the heart towards God, whether this be expressed in the self-communion of the Quietist, the rapt ecstasy of a St. Theresa, the divine absorption of the Mystic, the social silence of the Quaker, or the exuberant rapture of the Methodist; in the decorous services of ordinary Protestantism, the lonely exercises of the closet, or, as often, in more unconscious religiousness, when

"We stand,
Adore, and worship, when we know it not,
Pious beyond the intention of our thought,
Devout above the meaning of our will."

Whenever human hearts are uplifted to God in homage and adoration, there is worship, whether the worshipping feeling express itself in words, or be absorbed in silent intensity of recognition.

But inasmuch as practically it is almost the necessity of strong emotion to express itself, we shall in this Essay speak only of vocal and social praise.

Praise, unlike prayer and religious service, is an end in itself, and not a mere means to something else. It is the simple affection of piety seeking expression; and is, therefore, no more to be challenged on grounds of utility, than are the caresses of a child. The recognition of this as the final cause of praise, supplies us with an important rule for the regulation of its modes. Everything pertaining to it,—its thoughts, emotions, poetry, music, art,—must spring out of the simple feeling of worship, and be subordinate to it. Whenever the simple impulse of praise is lost or adulterated by any calculations or adjustments of utility, its highest nobleness is sacrificed, and its methods become cold, encumbered, or corrupt.

For instance, a service of worship may be cultured as a means of dogmatic teaching, or of sectarian proselytism; a means of diffusing, through the attractive beauty or sensuous beguilement of song, peculiar theological, or ecclesiastical dogmas. Thus sacred song was employed by the early Gnostics and Arians, as also by their orthodox opponents; and thus it has been subordinated in almost every subsequent age of the Church. The hymnal has been covertly polemic, subtly proselytizing. But clearly this is to desecrate pure praise, and illicitly to employ the expression of adoring feeling for the didactic uses of a sermon or a treatise. When a hymn is used as a polemic towards men, it loses its character as an expression of feeling towards God. When sacred music becomes the badge of a sect, it is no longer the unconscious garb of worshipping love. In their legitimate use, hymn and music are simply the natural and fervent expression of the devout, adoring heart towards God; and the intrusion of any feeling towards men that adulterates

its simplicity or narrows its charity, degrades and corrupts it.

In all ages and sections of the Church this has been a fruitful cause of the desecration of the service of praise. On the one hand, it has been degraded into a sectarian polemic; on the other, it has been disparaged in the feeling of the devout, and even deposed from the service of the Church, just because it has so easily lent itself to such uses. Sacramentarian Ritualism may represent to us the one perversion, Ascetic Puritanism the other. We do not mean that either has ceased to be devout, but only that both have dishonoured the pure worship of praise. We need not deny a true devoutness to the cumbrous and overlaid services of the Ritualist. We say only, that his garment of praise is too gaudy, elaborate, and ponderous for the simple and natural spiritual life which it clothes; and that its tendency is to confuse its recognitions, to emasculate its strength, and to divert the solitudes which should be given to the life itself to its mere clothing and accidents. Thus the form of worship is confounded with its essence; questions of antiquity and tradition, of liturgies and free services, of canonical laws and rubrical directions, of order and attitude, vestment and ceremony, supersede or embarrass the simple expression of worshipping love. The free action of the man is cumbered by the regulations of the nursery, or of the parade; freedom is sacrificed to form, life to ceremony; and too often the worship-service is made the vehicle for inculcating a dogma, or declaring a Church to men, instead of simply carrying devout hearts to God.

Neither would we venture to question the genuine devoutness of Ascetic Puritanism; but it grievously disparaged the worship-service of praise, as the fitting expression of it. Its religious feeling was intense, and

in many excellent ways it sought to express it,—in private meditations and prayers, in holy lives, in self-denying services and charities, in a martyr-spirit of endurance for Christ's sake;—but it shrunk from a free, uncalculating, joyous Church-praise. Because art and beauty had been substituted for the life which they should merely have adorned, Puritanism, in a most unnatural, but yet injurious revolt, denied the legitimacy of all sensuous elements in worship, declared war against music and beauty, and demanded a severity of form, of which multitudes are altogether incapable, and which is undesirable in even the most spiritual. Our sensuous nature is as essential a part of our complex being as our spiritual nature, and has its proper and potent ministry. It is, therefore, a partial philosophy which disallows, and a maimed service which excludes from worship, the ministry of any part of our nature. Speaking generally, therefore, Puritanism denied to the worshipping soul those natural aids of imagination and sense, which, to say the least, give æsthetic beauty to public services of worship, and which powerfully re-act upon the feelings which they express.

It is manifest, therefore, on the one hand, that the vehicle which is to transport the worshipping soul to God cannot be the cold product of mere literary or musical art, nor the formal prescription of ecclesiastical rubrics; nor may it be so complicate and elaborate in character as to cumber or confuse the expression of simple spiritual feeling; and, on the other, that it cannot be denuded of all sensuous form, nor reduced to a mere negation of other men's abuse; nor may it put an interdict upon any constituent part of our complex human nature. In the truest service of worship, all things,—emotion, intellect, sense,—will minister to the intensity of the religious feeling. These may not be the sacrifice itself, but they are the

wood and the fire that enkindle it. True worship is the natural expression of the living soul, freely gathering into itself such forces and taking such forms as the life itself may generate and shape.

It scarcely need be added that whenever, in order to magnify its preaching or its practical work, a Church puts its service of praise into a subordinate place, or leaves it to the slovenly possibilities of accident, or makes it a mere "introductory service"—as with too true a significance it is sometimes called—it utterly misapprehends the primary purpose of religious assemblies, it fails to realize the supreme privilege and joy of the religious life, and it disparages a means of glorifying God, upon which God Himself has pronounced a special commendation.

The relation of worship to theology is one of the primary questions involved in the consideration of the former. Theology determines the object of worship, the sentiments with which He is to be regarded, and the character of the worship that is to be offered to Him. While worshipping feeling will not express itself in the formulæ of scientific theology, it must necessarily be regulated by them. Worship must rest upon a theological basis, whereby it will be limited and coloured. For instance, no common act of worship is possible where men recognize different deities, or where their conceptions of the same deity are fundamentally diverse. If common acts of worship are attempted, they must be partial and embarrassed, just in proportion as conceptions of the deity or of his worship differ. So far as simple religious feeling goes, worship is the most catholic of all things, a common religious feeling may be expressed under most divergent theologies; but, as with other great emotions which are subjectively possible, the character of the feeling is largely determined by its definite object. To take

an extreme illustration, the religious feeling of a pious heathen may differ but little from that of a pious Christian; but a common act of worship is determined as much by the deity to whom it is addressed, as by the religious sentiment that prompts it. Hence it is essential to a congregational act of worship that those who join in it should accept a common theology, recognize, that is, the same object of worship, and be agreed in their general notions and sympathies in relation to Him. A worshipper of Jehovah might respect the religious feeling of a worshipper of Buddha, but he could not join him in any act of common worship which gave expression to that feeling.

The same principle must determine the limits of common worship among Christian men. For instance, the broad divergencies of Unitarian, Sacramentarian, and Evangelical theologies, must practically disable devotional fellowship in a congregation of worshippers. In all there is the common recognition of the one true God, as supreme Lord and Father. In addresses of praise and prayer to Him simply as such, therefore, all could heartily join. But as soon as the proper Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ is recognized and introduced into the act of worship, as soon as with the early Christians we "worship Christ as God," the Unitarian, who regards Him only as a man, or the Arian, who regards Him as only the first among creatures, is necessarily excluded. This recognition practically colours the theological thought, imbues the religious feeling, and regulates the practical dependence of a Trinitarian worshipper in so large and essential a degree, that he can tolerate no worship from which it is absent, while as necessarily the Unitarian or Arian can tolerate no worship into which it enters. Practically, therefore, save under conditions of most painful and undesirable restraint on both sides,

common acts of worship are impossible, not because of any intolerant feeling, but purely from incompatibility of theological recognition. There are, however, occasions and moods when the fervency of religious life and love is so great, that even diverse theologies are forgotten in the joy of a common worship. Beneath all theologies there is the brotherhood of true religious hearts, which may find occasions for expressing itself, and which really constitutes the communion of saints. We are speaking now, however, only of organized congregations.

Again, a worship into which the cultus of the Virgin and the saints is introduced by the Roman Catholic, necessarily excludes the Protestant. The latter can join the former in acts of worship which recognize only the Divine Glory of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but the superadded elements of Mariolatry and saint worship, however attenuated by ingenious distinctions between "Latria" "Hyperdulia" and "Dulia," provoke his dissent, and therefore hinder common devotion. So, again, when, as in the Greek, the Roman, and the Anglican Churches alike, the dogma of the "Real Presence" is introduced and made the central idea, cause, and object of worship, the Evangelical Protestant is excluded. He cannot, with the Sacramentarian, bow down before the bread and wine of the Eucharist; to him these are only material symbols of spiritual things, in no sense signs of a unique supernatural presence. In his apprehension, when adoration is thus offered to the bread and the wine, a natural and beautiful symbolism has degenerated into idolatry. Nor can any degree of mental reserve enable his joyous worship of the spiritual Christ in such an association. The necessity for such reserve, and the conscious possibility of serious misconceptions, and of evil influence upon others, will effectually hinder

that free and self-forgotten flow of devout feeling which is of the very essence of true worship. He would deem himself guilty of a repetition of the sin of the golden calf, were he so to conceive of the spiritual God as embodied in material forms.

In these instances, theological divergencies are so great as to make separate worshipping congregations imperative. In a far less degree, but yet in a degree sufficient to make them expedient, men, perfectly agreeing concerning the object of worship, may differ in their conceptions of the service to be presented, in their ideas of what will be most acceptable to Him, or in their constitutional or educational sympathies with what is most edifying to themselves.

Illustrations are furnished by the different conceptions of worship which are actually embodied in liturgies and choral services on the one hand, and in free prayer and plain song on the other. There may be perfect agreement in theological beliefs; on both sides it may be fully admitted that in no sense do these things enter into the essentials of worship; occasional acts of united devotion may be refreshing and joyous; and yet, practically, conception and preference may be so divergent as to hinder complacency and satisfaction, and therefore heartiness and edification, in common worship. Such differences of sympathy and preference are founded, not merely upon different conceptions of objective truth, but upon constitutional peculiarities of our subjective nature; and are a sufficient justification of separate congregations formed according to the natural affinities of their respective members. Nor is there anything to regret in this; it involves, necessarily, no violation of the unity of the Church, no disparagement or diminution of its brotherhood. To sin against diversities of religious life, by imposing upon it uniformity of service, is surely as

grievous and injurious as to sin against uniformity of service by permitting the free embodiment of such diversities. The diversity is natural, the uniformity is a sentiment which contradicts nature. Whenever diversities of conception or of preference are important enough to embarrass the free, joyous spirit of worship, the obvious expedient is to resort to distinctive forms that will give them natural expression. It is simply fanaticism in feeling, and tyranny in practice, for any one Church or individual to insist upon all others conforming to his preference, or submitting to his law. The Nonconformist who is intolerant of the Liturgist, is every whit as bigoted and tyrannical as the Conformist, who would allow no worship save according to the forms of the Book of Common Prayer. George Fox, in his crusade against "steeple-houses," is as intolerant as Archbishop Laud in his raid upon "conventicles." Like every other religious thing, forms of worship are fairly open to debate, on grounds either of Scriptural precedent, general religious principles, or practical expediency; but to insist upon any particular form as alone legitimate and authoritative, is to make one man's preference the law of another man's conscience, which is the essential principle of all intolerance. Hooker, in his great polemic, did not take this ground; he simply contended for the legitimacy of episcopal polity and ritual, which the Puritans denied,* and in this general position Hooker was right and his opponents

* That this is the general drift of the argument of the Third Book of the Ecclesiastical Polity, confirmed by passages elsewhere, especially in the Seventh Book (*e.g.*, chap. v. sect. 8, chap. xiv. sect. 11, the integrity of which, as distinguished from the Sixth and the Eighth, Mr. Keble, Hooker's latest and best editor, admits), is, I think, most certain, notwithstanding the strenuous and over-plausible argument of Mr. Keble to prove the contrary. It is the fundamental theory of Hooker's great conception, that while Christian doctrine belongs to the department of universal and perpetual law, modes of Church government belong to the department of expediency, and may be changed from time to time by legislative authority. Hooker is not always self-consistent, and passages tending to justify Mr. Keble's contention might doubtless be cited; but concerning even these, Mr. Keble says (preface, page 72, ed., 1866), "If, as many will be ready to assert, they are expressly or virtually contradicted by other passages of the same author, the utmost effect of such contradiction must be to neutralize him in this controversy, and make him unfit to be quoted on either side." Mr.

wrong. The root of all difficulty in freely recognizing diversities of Church worship, is the spurious conception of Church unity which has taken possession of so large a portion of Christendom. The only unity of which many can conceive is the unity of uniform organization and worship. The higher unity of free diversified life, seeking various embodiments according to its circumstances and preferences, is never imagined, or is conceived of only with apprehension. The true brotherhood of Christian Churches and of Christian men consists in the deeper principle of a common religious life, and is not necessarily affected even in the slightest degree by any diversities of Church organization or worship. In themselves these are no more inimical to unity and affection than are the analogous diversities of national, municipal, domestic, and personal life and habit. When mere preferences of mode are exalted into essentials of faith or badges of party, great principles are subordinated to sectarian rivalries or to fanatical intolerance. The responsibility of such schism must ever rest, not with those who refuse to comply with unauthorized requirements, but with those who make them. The only possibility of true brotherhood is for the legitimacy and necessity of such diversities of Church organization and worship to be fully recognized and heartily accepted.

Next, we have to consider the relations of worship-service to the religious life, which are obviously of vital importance in determining its true principles.

Although the final cause of the worshipping act is Divine praise, and not subjective religious edification, yet it is clear that acts of worship have a very powerful

Keble admits (*Ibid*, p. 59) that "It is enough with them [Jewel, Whitgift, Cooper, and others of the Reformers], to show that the government by archbishops and bishops is ancient and allowable; they never venture to urge its *exclusive* claim." He admits, also (p. 77), that Hooker and his school differed from Laud and his school. To me it is almost certain that his general position was that affirmed in the text,—a judgment confirmed by the high authority of Dean Milman. *Annals of St. Paul's*, p. 303.

reflex influence upon the religious feelings of those who engage in them ; they must therefore be considered and determined with a careful regard to such feelings. Anything in the character or accidents of worship-service that would arrest or injure devout feeling, or that would even fail to minister to it, is manifestly incongruous. Indeed, it is in the cultivation of the religious feeling of the worship that its comparative excellency consists. These two ends are not only harmonious, but mutually dependent ; we can offer to God the purest and highest praise only, when our religious feeling is elevated to its highest degree of purity and intensity. Many questions here claim consideration.

(I) The first is, the bearing of the religious sentiment of worship-service upon the mixed character of congregations. The distinction between the congregation and the Church,—believers and unbelievers,—spiritual and unspiritual,—is neither fanciful nor modern. The minister may not be able to determine the individual instances ; but the distinctive elements in the worshipping assembly are none the less indisputable. Save, perhaps, in ages of persecution—if even they were exceptions—it has, from the second or third century, always been formally recognized ; catechumens have always been distinguished from the faithful, simply because they were not the faithful. Nor are they the faithful now ; there are in our congregations multitudes who are not even catechumens ; a larger element than in any previous age of the Church, of men who themselves would make no claim to be spiritual persons. Not only is the recognition of this distinction abundantly justified by facts, but they who deny it, and who contend for the indiscriminate admission to the Lord's Table, and to all Church privileges of the entire congregation, depart from the most ancient tradition of the Church. The "multitudinism" of Established Churches is the

modern innovation, and not the individualism of Free Churches. The early Churches, like modern Congregational Churches, had clearly some means of distinguishing between catechumens and the faithful, of determining, that is, the distinctive religious character of individual men. And if, as communities of the faithful, Churches are to exist at all, if they are not to degenerate into promiscuous assemblies, to which Christian orators may preach, but in which no distinctive spiritual character is recognized, and no discipline is possible, the distinction must be maintained.

The relations of such mixed assemblies to public acts of religious worship, are thus somewhat complicated, but they are of great practical importance. How can the unspiritual members of a congregation sympathize with the sentiments of a spiritual service of worship? The pressure of the difficulty has led some writers to maintain that, in some way or other, the sentiments of public hymns and prayers should be made to harmonize with the mixed characters and feelings of those who use them. On the one hand, efforts have been made to eliminate the unspiritual members of the congregation, so as to make the service of worship strictly a *missa fidelium*; a *missa catechumenorum* being also provided, wherein no sentiments should be expressed, either in praise or prayer, which should transcend the spiritual character or attainments of the latter. Traces of such attempts appear as early as the third century, and theoretically there is much to be said for them. On the other hand, attempts have been made to eliminate, or to generalize the more spiritual or experimental sentiments of congregational hymns and prayers, so as to reduce them into harmony with the character of less spiritual, even of unspiritual men. To us, neither expedient appears to be either practicable or desirable. It is clearly impossible to degrade the hymns

and prayers of a public service of worship to the level of unspiritual character. In every high and holy sense they would cease to be worship at all. Worship is a service offered to God by spiritual and holy souls, and the forms provided for its expression must be in harmony with the *best states of such* ; for these to be inadequate, would enthrall, disappoint and injure worshipping feeling. Worshipping feeling may fall below them, but to those who are sincere this will be no evil, inasmuch as more than anything else, the higher expression will incite the inadequate feeling. We sing a psalm, such as the forty-second, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God ;" this may not at the moment be the actual mood of the soul, but when we address ourselves to utter the words, the desire is incited, and ere they are dismissed to God, they carry with them the yearning which they express. On the other hand, however select the assembly may be, it is not possible so to generalize forms of worship as that all shall find in them an exact expression of their religious feelings. In order that forms of worship may elevate, they must necessarily transcend the actual experience of the worshippers.

In congregational praise the only possible theory is for the most spiritual and fervent religious feeling to seek embodiment in the highest possible forms, and for each individual heart to strive after its realization. The responsibility of rightly using Church forms of worship must rest with each individual worshipper ; the Church offers to God its highest and most holy service of praise, in which she invites all to join ; the sincerity and intelligence with which each individual joins is necessarily left to his own conscience.

On the same principle, the form of Church hymns must be determined ; we have seen hymnals in which mistaken

and foolish efforts have been made to secure an imaginary congregational fitness, by changing expressions in the first person singular into plural forms. But the congregational use of a hymn or prayer is in no way affected by this distinction. The multitudinous use is not disabled by the individual form, the individual use is not lessened by the common participation of the assembly; the congregation is only the aggregate of individuals consentaneously uttering individual prayers and praises. Nearly all the psalms of Scripture are expressions of individual feeling in the first person singular; who deems them on that account unsuitable for congregational use? On the contrary, are they not felt to possess a point and intensity that a plural form would greatly diminish? Would it not almost destroy the power of some psalms to generalize them into plural forms of expression? The twenty-third, for instance, the sixty-third, or the hundred-and-third? Or such hymns as, "When I survey the wondrous cross," "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," "Jesus, refuge of my soul," "Abide with me, fast falls the eventide"? Is it too much to say that it is the singular form of expression, with its individual closeness and identity, which gives them their peculiar tenderness and power.

(2) The relation of worship-service to art has manifold aspects, and involves profound and difficult problems. It is not possible dogmatically to determine the place and limitations of the ministry of sense in spiritual things; inasmuch as the conditions of the problem are shifting and various. That degree of sensuous embodiment which in one stage of human culture would be excessive and superfluous, if not injurious, would be necessary and beneficial in another. All education begins with the sense, and through the sense perfects the spirit. The child needs his picture-alphabet, the savage his rude symbolism; the material institutions of Judaism were an

education for the spiritual apprehensions of Christianity. Much depends also upon natural temperament, social tradition, and educational habit. Men are Puritans and Ritualists by nature, as well as by culture. Even in the same church, men are variously affected by the same service. To some it may be oppressive by its sensuousness, or meagre through its ultra-spiritualism, while to others it may be exactly suited. Natural sympathy, culture, prejudice, exert manifold and subtle influences upon the feelings of worshippers. Hence, to some extent, every service of united worship will demand a sacrifice of personal preference on the part of individuals. Only a rational acknowledgment of the law of majorities, and an unselfish consideration for the equally legitimate preferences of others, can secure perfect practical harmony.

We may, however, speak of general tendencies, and insist upon the admission of certain principles, the application of which must be left to individual Churches or men. For instance, we may insist upon the legitimacy of the ministry of sense to the soul, and we may insist upon this being kept within such subordinate limits, that it shall be only a ministry; for the history of worship teaches no truth more emphatically than that it is the tendency of the sensuous to overpower and supersede the spiritual. Architecture, painting, poetry, music, decoration, ceremony, have gradually and subtly taken such possession of the sensuous sympathies of the worshipper, that either his spiritual communion with God has been altogether destroyed, or it has been so emasculated and corrupted, as to be impotently dependent upon these things. Whatever may be the legitimacy and use of æsthetics in worship, it needs to be carefully disengaged from spiritual worship itself, and firmly subordinated to it. It is the minister of spiritual feeling, and not its substitute. Men may medicate the soul through the sense until, like

the use of opium, it becomes, if not a necessity, yet a craving so strong and overmastering, that they are powerless to resist it. There is a truth in the gorgeous cathedral, the decorated church, the sumptuous service, and in the adventitious sentiment of the Christian year; but there is a truth also in "pious barns," and Puritanic simplicity, and stern disregard of "days and months and times and years;" and the contemptuous disparagement poured upon the latter arises, we may confidently say, not so much from the fact that they are more inimical to spiritual feeling than the former, as from the fact that they are more vulgar. England has had experience of both extremes; and while we are not called upon to vindicate either, and feel at liberty to urge a mean that shall avoid both, yet, if these were the only possible alternatives, we might with entire complacency point to the comparative vigour, fidelity, and fruitfulness of the life which Puritanism has engendered. Our fathers wisely preferred the less luxurious extreme, as the stern but faithful nurse of the nobler spiritual character. The mightiest things in the religious history of England have been achieved by it. It is still the most potent force in our religious life; and so far as it may be yet an alternative, we shall not be a whit behind our Puritan forefathers in our consentaneous, unhesitating adoption of the better part which they chose.

This alternative, however, is not forced upon us. The greater intelligence and the deeper feeling, to which the Free Churches of England as a whole have attained, render it possible to use without abusing the legitimate ministry of sensuous things to spiritual feeling. We may safely seek the realization of that perfect mean, in which congregations are united in common acts while the worshipping freedom of individual hearts is preserved, in which the sense is quietly ministered to by rich yet unobtrusive art,

so as to facilitate the unencumbered worship of the soul.

Sometimes, however, we encounter, even yet, the plausible objection to any special solitudes and efforts for artistic forms of public worship-service, that, inasmuch as holy and fervent emotional feeling is the essence of worship, this alone should be the object of our care. What does it matter, it is urged, whether God be worshipped silently or vocally—sitting, or it may be lounging upon a cushioned seat, or reverently standing before the Lord? whether we shout discordant hallelujahs, or chasten our song into harmony and beauty? “God is a Spirit,” and worship “in spirit and in truth” is all that He requires. Our utmost culture can impart no pleasure to His ear, while He who reads the heart knows the praises that it means. The less or more of our harmony and beauty, therefore, can be of no importance in His sight. It is further urged that the history of worship abundantly shows the insidious and seductive peril that lies in the æsthetic accidents of worship-service; how prone these are to usurp the place and to emasculate the power of the spiritual feeling they profess to clothe. In reply, we remark, first, that even conceding the indifference of the spiritual object of our worship to the forms in which it is presented to Him, this is but part of the problem. There is another fact in the philosophy of spiritual life which is equally indisputable—viz., that if material forms are powerful to affect it for evil, they are equally powerful to affect it for good. Besides the moral and spiritual conditions of worship in its relation to God, it has æsthetic relations to our own nature which cannot be disregarded with impunity. We are made creatures of sense as well as of soul, and we cannot long sustain any worship of the spirit that is careless of outward form. Either it will degenerate into

a purely subjective spiritualism, die into an indifferent quiescence, or evaporate into mere sentimentality. Next, we can scarcely deem any praise so pure and fervent as it ought to be, if it do not inspire a reverent and careful manner. Strong feeling necessarily affects both words and attitudes. If we feel reverently, the attitudes and tones and embodiments of our worship will be reverent.

In everything else, in our ministries to one another, in services and gifts of love and of friendship, in the hospitalities and reciprocations of social life, we are careful concerning the manner, as well concerning the substance of our service. Courtesy is as imperative as kindness. We do not rudely enter each other's dwellings. We approach the sovereign with a scrupulous regard to proprieties, and with a studied deference of manner; we should not sit, or even stand in a lounging attitude, in addressing her. We should feel it a discourtesy were singers in an oratorio or a concert to sit during their performance. Shall we then presume upon our spiritual relations to the "blessed and only Potentate," and blunder out rude meanings in careless attitude, slovenly speech, and discordant music, on the ground that our heart of worship is sincere? May we disregard the holiness of the ground upon which we stand, and refuse to take our shoes from off our feet in the very presence of the Holy One, on the pretence that His spiritual eye recognizes no sanctity of forms? Do we not often cover much irreverence of heart under the garb of a highly-wrought spiritualness? Further, of all the mistakes in worship into which we can fall, none is more presumptuous than to conclude that because others are formal or superstitious, we may be slovenly or irreverent, or that the proper corrective of exaggerated ritual is a parsimonious baldness. If anything can excuse and confirm superstition, it is irreverence. Worship

has its beauty as well as its holiness, and we must not make it repulsive under pretence of making it devout.

In the Temple-service there was not only the Holy Sacrifice and the fragrant incense, but the golden altar and the richly-robed priest—not only the holy song, but the rich poetry of David's psalms, and the cultured music of the sons of Asaph and Korah. In every allusion of the psalmists, as well as in every record of the historian, we feel the implications of an earnest reverential manner. What special spirituality can there be in the pious doggrel of hymns, or in the rude incongruities of tunes? Why should it be necessary to abjure all culture and excruciate all taste, in order that piety may have its supreme enjoyment? It is true that worship does not consist in artistic song, but neither does it in inharmonious doggrel. While the essence of all worship must ever lie in the true and fervent expression of spiritual feeling, the reverence which constitutes the perfection of such feeling demands that worship be clothed with every beauty that can adorn, with every appliance that can enhance it, so that in God's sanctuary there may be beauty as well as strength; for beauty is the comely costume of strength. Strength bedizened is not beauty, neither is strength denuded, but strength clothed in rich but yet unobtrusive garments. It is surely a careless if not a scornful disparagement of the service of the Church, to be contented with rude inharmonious song in it, while we bestow upon our drawing-room song and our music-hall concerts our highest artistic culture and care. No genuine piety can excuse negligence; by its very negligence it will testify to its own defects. Everything pertaining to worship should surely indicate a reverent solicitude to bring to God the best that we can proffer—an offering perfect in every appliance that can give emphasis to its adoration, intensify its rapture,

or beautify its love. Hence, the devoutest worshippers will provide for their praise hymns of the highest poetry, and music of the richest harmony. Hence, it is as much the obligation of reverence, that a congregation prepare itself for its public service of song, as that a minister prepare himself for his public service of teaching. An unstudied song is more inexcusable than an unstudied sermon, for the sermon is addressed only to man, while the song is addressed to God. The music of worship-song is no mere amusement for those who have musical taste, nor may it be regarded by one part of a congregation as a mere concession to the preferences of another. It has high and solemn functions pertaining to all who worship. It adds beauty, intensity, and reverence to praise, and none can neglect or think lightly of it without suffering a retributive disability. Those who neglect to cultivate the power of expressing their praise in musical song, deprive themselves of the highest power of praise; if they do not come to disparage that of which they have culpably remained incapable, they can only join the joyous song of worship with discordant voices, or in ignominious silence stand in the worshipping throng, inappreciating and enduring auditors of a praise in which, as abundant experience shows, the least educated classes of the community may easily become intelligent participators. How David prepared for the service of the Tabernacle, and of the Temple which Solomon was to build, the sacred historians minutely inform us. He appointed a daily service of song with skilled musicians, who formed a vocal choir, and played upon instruments of every kind, that thus they might lead the worship of the congregation. "Asaph the singer, and his brethren the singers, to minister before the Ark continually, as every day's work required; and with them Heman and Jeduthun, with trumpets and

cymbals, for those that should make a sound, and with musical instruments before the Lord." These were to "prophesy with harps with psalteries and with cymbals." Concerning Heman, we read that "God gave him fourteen sons and three daughters; all these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord." "The number of them, with their brethren, that were instructed in the songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, was two hundred fourscore and eight." Thus, after four hundred years, David settled the worship of the Jewish Church. And when Solomon had built the Temple, and David's appointments were fully carried out, four thousand persons were employed in conducting the service of worship. The people all joined in the service of song—a congregational worship led by a noble choir, on a grander scale than the world has ever seen. David's appointments of worship were elaborate and costly. Not even that he might build synagogues or send missionaries through the land would he impoverish the worship of the Temple. At the magnificent national service at the dedication of Solomon's Temple, the historian tell us with solicitous emphasis, that it was in response to the worshipping song, and not to the blazing sacrifices, that Jehovah came down and consecrated the Temple by His presence. "It came to pass, that as the Levites, who were singers, having cymbals, psalteries, and harps, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, it came to pass that when they lifted up their voice with the cymbals and instruments of music, that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, and the glory of the Lord filled the house."

The instructiveness of all this lies in the fact, that a service of song was no part of the Levitical ritual. No provision for such was made by Moses. No song was ordained in connection with sacrifice—it was the simple prompting of worshipping feeling. The worship of the

Temple stood upon precisely the same footing as that of our Christian Churches. It was the natural impulse of religious feeling, not compliance with any Divine injunction. Nor were any dispensational peculiarities involved in it. It was as much a prompting and example of piety, as the first hymn of the Christians in the upper room. In each case the worship was in harmony with the circumstances of those who offered it. It would have been as incongruous for Solomon to have worshipped in the furtive unadorned way of the upper room, as for the first Christians to have emulated the choral magnificence of the Temple. The accompaniments of worship must always be determined by the circumstances of the worshippers—their wealth, their culture, and the general expediency of things. A meagre cottage service, in a spacious and crowded church of opulent worshippers, would be as incongruous and unseemly as a dilapidated or impoverished building. Every appointment of God's house should be the best that circumstances permit. It can never with loving hearts be a question what will suffice; else might David have provided for the Temple of Jehovah brass instead of gold. The question of our love will ever be—how much it can bring—in what ways it can the most fully express itself—what in worship is for us the most seemly, and the most congruous with the habits and adornments of our social life. And so long as there is any appointment, any element, any excellency of worship that we have not attained, after that we shall eagerly strive.

Excess of material circumstance in spiritual worship, whether of architectural adornment, ritual ceremony, musical elaboration, or even intellectual fastidiousness, is as injurious to it as is over-cumbrous machinery in manufacture, excess of ceremonial in social life, superfluous raiment to personal activity, or gaudy ornamentation to

personal grace. It is both injurious to life and offensive to taste. But equally so, on the other hand, is penuriousness and nakedness. If we may not overlay spiritual life, neither may we denude it. The true law of life is that its energies be developed in all the force and with all the beauty of which they are capable, and that it worship with such cultured adornment as in the highest degree may appeal to and express its own spiritual emotions. This is the simple law and the sufficient test of all artistic appliances. Is any particular cultus conducive to the worshipping heart of the congregation? If not, and still more if it be injurious to it, then no matter how beautiful in itself it may be—how conducive to the profit and joy of other congregations—however sanctioned by history and contemporary use—let it be rejected, and, if needful, let it be dealt with as the serpent of brass which Hezekiah destroyed and pronounced to be “Nehushtan.”

This conception of Church services involves the further question whether it is essential to the worship of the congregation, that all its members should vocally contribute to it. That this should be the rule of worship-song admits of no question. Congregational praise should manifestly be expressed in forms in which all ordinary worshippers may easily join, so that the sacrifice of praise may go up to God, a great offering of united vocal song. If any individual be so hopelessly unmusical, as that he cannot open his lips without annoying others by his discordance, it is clearly incumbent upon him to deny himself whatever pleasure or advantage he may find in it. No man is justified in destroying the profit or pleasure of others for the sake of his own. But this obligation has its obvious limits on the part of those who impose it. The scientific musician or the fastidious amateur may not silence the great bulk of a congregation, because it has not attained to his culture. The same principle applies

to the place and functions of Church choirs. The only legitimate conception of them is, that they lead the song of the congregation. God cannot be worshipped vicariously, and few perversions are more incongruous than for a congregation to be listening while a choir is performing. Are, then, such services of song, as from their musical difficulty or peculiarity disable the general congregation from taking part in them—anthems, for instance, as sung in cathedral services, or occasionally by the choirs of Congregational Churches—in any proper sense worship at all? Even granting that, with the choir itself, the anthem is sung as an act of worship, and not as a mere musical performance to auditors, is it the worship of the congregation? Theoretically, perhaps, it would be difficult to deny that it may be. It would, too, be contradictory to experience to affirm that even upon mere auditors no religious effect is produced by sacred music. We are all conscious of emotions, more or less deep, in listening to an oratorio or an anthem. It need not be denied that a choir performance may in some degree minister to the religious feeling of which worship is the expression; and we may not, therefore, pronounce such absolutely illicit. If, for purposes of religious nurture, a congregation choose to listen to an anthem, or to the choir-performance of any other sacred music, who may judge them? If they can thus the best minister to their own heart of worship, they are justified before the God whom they serve, and may not be condemned by men.

But we may speak of general principles and tendencies; and it is obvious, that merely to listen while others sing, even though the song do excite in us a certain degree of devout feeling, is to sacrifice a large element of personal and united praise. It is surely praise in a higher degree when each individual vocally joins in it, and not only feels, but gives expression to his feeling of worship. The

consentaneous vocal song of a whole congregation is a higher degree of worship than the vicarious song of some twelve or twenty members of it. Hardly, we fear, would experience testify to any very great degree of devotional feeling produced by mere choir singing ; not even in the judgment of the broadest charity, would either the deportment or the song of cathedral choirs produce generally the impression that they are pre-eminent ministers to the devout feeling of the congregation. Hardly is it possible, our nature being what it is, for a dozen or twenty men to sing before a large congregation—some of them singing duetts and solos of very artistic music—and not to sink the feeling of worshippers in that of performers—not to address themselves to men rather than to God. Hardly is it possible for a congregation, which has been joining in the plain song of worship, to listen to the anthem without suspending the feeling of worshipper for that of mere auditor or critic. Can it be doubted that many go to such services to hear a sacred concert, rather than to join in an act of Divine praise ? Hence, when the anthem is done, the moving crowd too surely indicates how glad they are to escape the rest of the service. Who has ever ventured to justify choir-singing on the ground that it has been found, in any distinctive degree, to be practically conducive to the spiritual worship of the congregation ? And on what other ground is it defensible at all ? Those who wish for the laudable enjoyment of sacred music, can hear it in almost any music-hall, and at almost any time, especially in towns large enough to have cathedral services.

On the whole, therefore, not on any traditional or ecclesiastical grounds, but on the grounds of mere expediency, we should pronounce against all mere choir-singing in services of public worship. The province of the choir is to lead the song of the congregation, not to

sing for it; just as in prayer it is the province of the minister to lead its supplications, not to pray for it. Scarcely is it possible for a congregation so to delegate its worship-song, as that a choir shall offer it to God with personal feelings of fervent worship, while the heart of every auditor vibrates in devout and perfect harmony, so that the worship which ascends is the common offering of the congregation. In the plain song of liturgical services all devout worshippers may join. In the deeply fervid responses of Tallis's grand and simple music it is difficult not to join. In the chanting of the psalms, greater difficulty may be felt, so rarely, until of late years, have they been either informed by intelligence or expressed with feeling. Individuals may dislike both, and, for their comfort and edification, seek plainer services; this is a matter of taste rather than of ability. But rarely have we heard the delegated song of the choir, whether in elaborate canticle services that were practically beyond the capacities of the congregation, or in anthems which were not intended for them, without palpable arrest and injury to the religious feeling of the general congregation.

The objection, of course, lies equally against choir-performances in the more Congregational services of Nonconforming Churches. Who that has had to listen while the choir has performed an anthem, has not felt thankful, devotionally speaking, when the conscious arrest put upon the flow of Congregational praise was removed. The anthem is altogether peculiar to English Protestant worship.* Its structure is utterly incongruous with Congregational song. It is possible, indeed, to

* It originated in an Injunction of Queen Elizabeth, in the year 1559, that "for the comforting of such as delight in musick, it may be permitted that in the beginning or at the end of Common Prayer, either morning or evening, there may be sung an hymn, or such like song, to the praise of Almighty God, in the best sort of melody or musick that may be conveniently devised."

reduce and simplify its construction, until it is brought down to the capabilities of the congregation generally; but precisely in that proportion its character as an anthem is destroyed, and it becomes a psalm-tune, only set to unmetrical words. If we are to sing psalm-tunes, by all means let them be legitimately produced and effectively constructed. There can be no objection, *per se*, to a congregation singing anything that it is capable of singing; but when anthems are brought within the range of its capabilities, the cultured musician does not care much for them as anthems. The incongruity becomes as great as the so-called chanting of Metrical Hymns—turning, that is, the recitative of a rhythmical composition into the metrical feet of a psalm-tune. If congregations delight in this, by all means let them do it, only do not let them imagine that this is what is meant by chanting. It is simply transforming what may be a fine rhythmical chant into a very doubtful metrical tune.

There is really no need for either. The choral capacities of congregations are very great, and as yet they are almost wholly undeveloped. The advance of general education—the special culture which of late years has been given to music—the existence in almost every town and village of musical associations, from the Sacred Harmonic Society to the Tonic-Sol-Fa Class, have rendered possible in congregations a combination of musical science and broad massive effect, such as has not been possible hitherto—and such as, where it has been realized, has delighted alike devout feeling and cultured taste, and has produced impressions such as the most effective cathedral choirs have failed to approach.*

* As an illustration of the musical cultivation possible to the most rustic congregations, the writer would cite the peasants in the valley of Ormont-dessus, among whom he resided for some weeks in the summer of 1868. Not only in the churches, Free and Established, but in open-air services, there was not an old peasant woman, nor a young shepherd boy, who did not use music-book as well as hymn-book, and sing in part-harmony with a precision and a power that he has never heard in the most cultivated English congregations. It is neither the capability nor the taste that English congregations lack, only the culture.

Worship-song is necessarily restricted to lyrical forms of poetry, in which alone the consentaneous emotion and offering of a congregation can be expressed. It does not admit of didactic poetry—songs which are merely disguised sermons—which expound doctrines, inculcate duties, or analyze feeling. Worship is the expression of feeling, not the formal inculcation or description of it. In special circumstances it may be expedient to embody in song other things beside worshipping feeling. Luther versified Creeds and Catechisms, the Decalogue, the Lord's Prayer, and even the Confession of Augsburg; and, at one time or other, most Churches have found it expedient to use didactic hymns, just as in an infant-school you set to music the multiplication table. Hymns and sermons have often been the chief means of theological instruction; but just in proportion as Congregational song becomes a creed or a homily, it ceases to be worship. If, therefore, the doctrinal or didactic hymns, which are still found in our hymn-books, are to be justified in their use by congregations of normal intelligence, it must be on other grounds. Hence, too, the incongruity of singing some of the didactic psalms, including even David's anathemas of his enemies. These are mostly odes rather than lyrics, and are to be used for historical instruction rather than for the expression of devotional feeling. It is possible to sing such things, as it is possible to sing the genealogies of the Book of Chronicles; and we do not say there is any harm in so doing, beyond its incongruity with professed acts of worship.

Neither does Church-song admit dramatic poetry, which expresses passion in action, as in the Mediæval Mysteries, or in elaborate ritual ceremonies. Even the lyrics of the Church must have a special character and adaptation, if they are to be effective expressions of devotional feeling. Much more is essential to a true hymn than mere religious

poetry in appropriate rhythm. A true theology must underlie these, and be held in solution by them. The song must also be instinct with a fervent religious life—be inspired by, and have power to inspire deep devotional feeling. The truth of its theological conceptions being assumed, the three great essentials of an effective hymn are—that it be inspired by a rich and fervid spiritual life—that it have strength and beauty of poetical expression—and that its form be such as to enable its efficient use as a musical song. Like a prayer, a hymn is an outburst not so much of eloquence as of life. Hence the hymns of the greatest poets, and hymns written to fulfil certain requirements, so frequently fail. Not only is genius not necessarily allied to spiritual life, but inspired moods of spiritual life cannot be bespoken or calculated. On the other hand, some of the most precious hymns of the Church have been the productions of less gifted men, whose spontaneous outbursts have combined fulness of spiritual life with adequate power of poetical expression. Sometimes the richness of the spiritual feeling expressed overpowers the sense of inferior poetry; and the delicate instinct of the Church, while it has rejected the colder production of mere intellectual genius, has enshrined the ruder inspiration of fervid piety in the place of its most cherished devotional forms. The hymnody of the Church can boast of but few names of genius, although genius has often essayed to minister to it; for when genius has not lacked piety, it has too often lacked the inspiration of fervid words. Wherever, as in the Psalms of David, the “Gloria in Ecclesia,” the “Te Deum,” the “Dulcis Jesu Memoria,” and many of our English hymns, genius and pious fervor have combined, the result has been a perfect expression of worshipping feeling. Every true hymn must express the passionate life of some devout soul, and in such a sympathetic and

catholic way as to be also a fitting vehicle for the expression of all devout feeling. In this way we account for the hold which some of the hymns of secondary poets, such as Watts, Wesley, Toplady, Lyte, Montgomery, Heber, and others have taken. Such for instance as, "Come let us join our cheerful songs," "When I survey the wondrous Cross," "Jesus, refuge of my soul," "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," "Abide with me," "Hail to the Lord's Anointed," "From Greenland's icy mountains;" these are wonderful forms for the expression of popular religious feelings, and therefore they are so precious to all devout hearts.

Hence, too, the fact, that the hymnody of the Church has always fluctuated with its spiritual life; a dead Church has never produced living hymns. Luther's hymns were the expression of the throbbing passionate age in which he lived, as well as of the soul of the man himself; so were Wesley's.* The affluent hymnology of the last twenty years is the product of its quickened religious life. By an instinct, too, as strong as it is infallible, the Church has always indicated its quickened religious life, by its larger use of sacred song. From Wycliffe and Huss, whose followers were nicknamed "psalm-singers," to the last ritualistic revival, excitements of spiritual life have always found expression in outbursts of song. "It was a sign," says Bishop Burnet, "by which men's affections to that work [the Reformation] were everywhere measured, whether they used to sing these [David's Psalms] or not."† "The infectious frenzy of sacred song," as Warton calls it, was a prominent characteristic of the early English Reformation. Bishop Jewel, writing in 1560 to Peter Martyr, says, "a change now appears visible among the people, which

* For some admirable remarks on this characteristic of the Wesleyan Hymnody, see Isaac Taylor's *Wesley and Methodism*, p. 89, *et seq.*

† History of the Reformation, Part II., Book I., *sub.* 1548.

nothing promotes more than inviting them to sing psalms. This was begun in one church in London, and so quickly spread itself through the city and neighbouring towns. Sometimes, in St. Paul's Churchyard, after sermon at the Cross, there will be 6,000 persons singing together." * "Geneva-jiggs and Beza's Balletts," were the alliterative reproach of the songs of the French Huguenots, who were often betrayed to their enemies by their irresistible psalm-singing. So it was with the early Independents, the Scottish Covenanters, and the later Methodists.

In the exercise of their liberties, most of the Churches of Protestantism have freely incorporated into their worship whatever of sacred song successive generations of the Church may have produced, which their spiritual instincts recognize as worthy expressions of devout feeling. The canon of revealed truth—that which God has given to man as a sufficient instruction for every religious life, is closed; but not the canon of worshipping song—that which religious lives bring to God in praise and prayer. Who may presume to write "Finis" upon any human form of prayer, or collection of hymnody? When Ambrose has brought his contribution, is Gregory to be forbidden? When Gregory has completed his Hymnarium, are Celano and Bernard to be disallowed? When the great mediæval hymns have found their place in the worship of the Church, is Luther to be interdicted? When Luther has filled the Churches of the Reformation with his trumpet songs, is Gerhardt to be declared contraband? When Sternhold and Hopkins have prepared their version of the psalms, is Watts to be delivered over to "uncovenanted mercies."? When Watts has completed his unrivalled canon of psalms and hymns, are the contributions of Wesley and Doddridge, Cowper and Heber, Montgomery and Keble, to be put into an apo-

* Zurich Letters, 1st Series, p. 71.

crypha? Who will presume to discriminate the inspiration? Blessed be the great Head of the Church, its hymnody, hitherto, has been a perennial inspiration of its spiritual life. The great gift of sacred song has not been restricted to any age, or nation, or church,—some great voice has ever been heard attesting its endowment with “the gift and faculty divine,”—and it were as foolish as presumptuous to reject its latest products. The ever varying, ever developing spiritual life of each generation of men will necessarily adapt or create its own hymnody; and the presumption is, that the later inspirations will be more precious than the earlier—the ever enriching thought, the ever enlarging experience, the ever deepening sanctity of the Church will produce a richer, nobler song.

Some few of the songs of the Church, such as the “Gloria in Excelsis,” the “Te Deum,” and others of later days, are so felicitous and catholic, they deal with such universal truths and experiences, and deal with them so grandly, that they are hymns for all time, and bear transference into all languages. The heart of humanity enshrines them, the venerableness of age gathers upon them, antiquity clothes love with reverence, association with the past gives meaning and intensity to the experiences of the present; and with a reverent and rapturous joy we take upon our lips words used by martyrs, confessors, and fathers, through which the hopes and fears, the love and faith of their great heroic souls struggled up to God. We cannot be unmoved or uninspired, as in quiet churches and homes we sing hymns once sung in furtive places—in deserts and catacombs, in fortresses and prisons, on fields of battle and in the blazing pyre,—hymns that once echoed in the holy places where our fathers worshipped—in “upper rooms” and “places by the river side;”—hymns that Pliny heard “sung to Christ

as God," in the morning prayer-meetings of the early Church ; and that Jerome heard in the fields and the woods, from " the ploughman, the mower, and the vine-dresser ;" —hymns sung as lullabies over the cradles of pious homes, and as praise when the incense of domestic sacrifice ascended ; as lullabies again, when in the second cradle of life the child-like soul sunk into the sleep of God ;—triumphant hymns, when kings and multitudes have done homage to Christianity,—in the Cathedral of Ambrose, in the capital of Charlemagne, in the congregations of the Reformation ;—Pentecostal hymns in which a thousand times the Church has shouted its praise for fresh descents of the Holy Spirit, which have " shaken " more than " the *place* in which they were assembled," and crowned the worshippers with more than tongues of fire. With such songs upon our lips worship becomes an inspiration of more than the heart of the immediate worshippers, we speak and feel what our fathers also spake and felt ; our confidence is strong inasmuch as it was also their confidence—their heart was as our heart, our speech is caught from their lips ;—in an august sense the scene of Pentecost is reproduced, again there " come together devout men out of every nation under heaven, each speaking in his own tongue, but each taught by all the wonderful works of God."

In respect of the more ordinary or temporary song of the past, the true use of it is to transmute it into forms of the present, adding thereto whatever of larger experience or riper wisdom succeeding generations may have contributed ; or if it be incapable of this, to let it fall into disuse. Thus we use the theology of the past, its spirit transmigrates into modern forms. Thus we use the creeds of the past—the weapons of various polemical ages—we retain the precious truths of which they were special defences, but we put them—as we put

chain armour or old arquebuses into the Tower—into the museum of the Church, as things which were great and glorious in their day, but are unfitted for the uses of modern life.

We do not disallow early Church hymns and music, but neither do we exalt them to a place of pedantic idolatry; so far as they are capable of it we utilize them, so far as they cannot be utilized we dismiss them. Doubtless they contain the rudiments of all worship, as archaic forms of language or costume contain the essentials of all speech or dress; but it were in the last degree injurious to insist upon the implicit retention of their forms and limitations, and to disallow the maturity of development, the rich contributions and the moulding power of later genius. It is surely a foolish thing so to reverence the embalmed dead of the past, as to turn away from the living forms of the present. Only fanaticism will make the virtue of things to consist in their being old; only pedantry will regard things ancient as necessarily sublime. It is surely a blind antiquarianism that would stereotype the worship of the Church according to the conceptions of a Gregory, a Luther, or a Cranmer, and imprison in their forms the living impulses of devout genius through all subsequent ages, refusing to recognize as valid that which has not upon it the stamp of centuries. He only reverences the past intelligently who accepts all its fruitage, who recognizes the spirit of Ambrose in the latest sacred poet, and the spirit of Gregory in the latest sacred musician. The alternative of a present that knows no past, is not a past that knows no present.

Thus in free and healthful Church-life there will be a constant transmutation of worship-song, a perpetual decay and efflorescence—the old will pass away and the new take its place, or rather old life will be reproduced in new forms. Worship-forms are no exception to the

fruitful and beneficial law of the entire creation of God, "One generation passeth away, another generation cometh." One reason for the necessity of perpetual reconstruction of worship-forms is, that they have generally had their birth in times of struggle, excitement, or change;—they bear the various impress of these in their freshness, reality and force, but also in their onesidedness and pugnacity. As in a mirror they reflect the various passions and tumults of conflict, often incongruously blending polemical statements of doctrine with deeply-moved feeling. Hence of necessity whatever goes beyond the expression of the most general spiritual experiences becomes anachronous.

The actual hymnody of Protestantism dates only from Luther,—that of England is not older than Dr. Watts; and even among Congregationalists he has begun to succumb to the changing forms of theological thought, and to the varied wants of a new and a more aggressive religious age. That in his song which is catholic and permanent is being rapidly disintegrated from that which is more conventional, and the great majority of his hymns have already fallen into disuse. Among Episcopalians, Sternhold and Hopkins are wholly consigned to the sepulchre, and Tate and Brady are "turning their faces to the wall;" while "Hymns Ancient and Modern" are too polemical to survive the passing sacramentarian phase of Episcopalian doctrine. The individuality of every age demands congruous forms of expression. New life demands new songs, and the great Head of the Church has never permitted it to suffer from lack of such; when, that is, the Church itself has not made His great commandment void through her arbitrary traditions. The singer comes whenever a new and distinctive life demands him, and the old song that has served its generation passes away. Thus, according to the great law of growth, the old foliage falls and decomposes, and becomes

the compost of a new life, more rich and beautiful and fruitful than itself.

Church lyrics take two forms—the one rhythmical only, the other metrical as well as rhythmical; the former is the more ancient, and is the primitive form of all song, as in the recitatives of Arab tribes, the American Indians, or the New Zealanders. This is the form of the Hebrew psalms of the Old Testament, and of the early Greek and Syrian hymns. The metrical form appears first in the Latin hymns of Ambrose and Gregory, and from them it has passed into the subsequent worship of the entire Western Church. The Hebrew psalms of the Old Testament are manifestly intended for use as worship-song; their lyrical form, and the fact that so many of them are inscribed as “delivered to the chief musician,” demonstrate that they were intended for musical use only. Lyrical psalms are not mere edifying Scriptures, to be read as Church lessons, as we would read a chapter of the Chronicles, or a New Testament Epistle; they are passionate songs, the devout expression of the worshipping heart of religious men; David did not say, “O come let us read unto the Lord a new poem,” but “O come let us sing unto the Lord a new song.” “Singing,” says Law, “is as much the proper use of a psalm, as devout supplication is the proper use of a form of prayer; and a psalm only read is very much like a form of prayer that is only looked over.”*

With just as much propriety might we so use our hymn books, and read as church lessons the sublime compositions of Watts or Wesley, Toplady or Montgomery. We may get a certain benefit from reading a hymn, but when we sing it the benefit is tenfold. Who does not feel the difference between quietly reading the hymn,

* *Serious Call*, chap. xi

"Come let us join our cheerful songs," and singing it to a bright exulting melody, in the music of which there is a meaning and an inspiration additional to those of the words. Imagine the worshippers of heaven saying, and not singing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Indeed a true lyric hardly can be read; if we attempt to read such a psalm as the Ninety-fifth, or the Hundred-and-Third, we inevitably rise into a chant.

God has not given us a Christian David. No book of inspired song contributes to the canon of the New Testament. Among manifold reasons, perhaps, for this—that in the Jewish psalms a sufficient provision of Biblical song is made for the religious life of humanity. We never think of these psalms as the psalter of the Jewish Church only. We instinctively feel that they have a broader character, and are designed for a more catholic use. We of this nineteenth Christian century, have no expressions for our various religious experiences so adequate as David's. When we pray the most fervently, we use his words, when we praise the most rapturously, we seize his harp. He speaks for us, as no one else has spoken, the religious experiences of life, the great struggles of our soul—all that we can remember, experience, or hope—a penitence that our sorrow can never surpass, an ardour that we can but feebly emulate, a rapture that we can but faintly share. Who, with all the religious light of the New Testament, and with all the religious culture of nineteen Christian centuries, can say that his spiritual experiences have outgrown David's psalms? If we hesitate to use them, it is because they go beyond our experiences rather than fall short of them. We work, we struggle, we pray, we pass through the daily vicissitudes of modern thought and feeling and action, and David's psalms are more precious to us than Charles Wesley's hymns.

All the Hebrew psalms are not lyrics, and the collection was not intended as a Church psalter. It is a national collection of devotional poetry, made up of at least five smaller collections—a long and gradual accumulation, completed and put into its present form after the Captivity. It contains many pieces, neither written as songs nor meant to be used with music ; these we read for edification, just as we read the Book of Job.

But grave questions have arisen in Protestant Churches concerning the proper use of those psalms which are lyrics, generated chiefly by the irreverent soulless ritual of their ordinary liturgical use. Chanting psalms, as it is technically called, like forms of prayer and the use of organs, had been so shamefully misused, and had lent itself so readily to forms of service out of which all religious feeling and significance had been lost, that it was not surprising that the new religious life of Puritanism should revolt from and utterly disallow it. It is very easy to pronounce upon this a contemptuous sentence of ignorant fanaticism. In a normal state of things it might perhaps be so designated. Men may wisely select a camping ground, which, if judged by the requisites of a peaceful dwelling, might seriously implicate their sagacity. Perilous diseases demand desperate remedies. The history of Lutheran worship, as compared with that of Calvinistic worship on the Continent, and the history of Episcopal worship, as compared with that of Puritan Churches in England, go very far to justify the extreme position thus taken ; on the assumption, that is, that our criteria of genuine worship be just. Beyond all question, speaking generally, the worship of Calvinistic Churches on the Continent, and of Nonconforming Churches at home, has retained more of spiritual purity and vitality than the worship of Liturgical Churches.

It does not, however, follow that that which was the

wisest, and the only safe policy in the first protest and separation from ritualism, is the best normal form of Church-worship; although recent developments of ritualism demonstrate that the peril has not altogether passed, and constrain us to speak of modifications with more of hesitancy than we should have done a few years ago. Still the Free Churches of England have, for the last few years, felt that they might somewhat relax their polemical attitude and militant vigilance, and permit a worship somewhat more indulgent to the æsthetic taste and normal feelings of peaceful citizens. Of liturgical forms of prayer we will speak further on—at present we are concerned only with forms of praise. Nothing but the sternest religious necessity could justify the abnegation of the ancient song of the Church,—the song of the Jewish Temple, the song of our Lord and His disciples, the almost exclusive song of the Christian Church for nearly four hundred years, and to this day the song of the almost universal Church of Christ. Those who cherish the traditions of the Puritans, and who still retain their convictions of the ritual peril of chanting, evade rather than solve the question concerning the use of the lyrical psalms, when they forbid them to be sung at all.

Another expedient for avoiding rhythmical song, is to reduce the Hebrew psalms to metrical forms. Before we will consent to sing them, these glorious songs of inspiration must be subjected to the manipulations of Sternhold and Hopkins, Tate and Brady, Thomas Rous, Dr. Watts, or John Keble; the inevitable effect of which is, that all primitive beauty of form,—the ethereal grace which turns mere thought into poetry, and which is evanescent to every touch save that of its creator, is lost. The psalms of the divine poet are reduced by a humanizing process to—what we see in these soporific versions. If Wesley

or Montgomery protested against those who for any purpose should presume to alter their hymns, can we conceive how David would have protested had he surmised that, in order to adapt them to metrical tunes, his glorious songs would be stretched upon such procrustean beds, all the distinctive form of his Hebrew rhythm ruthlessly destroyed, all the subtle inspiration of his poetical imagination evaporated, and his Oriental genius cramped into the metrical squares and circles of a hymnody of which he had no conception, and with which his compositions have no congruity. It is one thing to render the sentiment of a passage of Scripture into song, as for example Dr. Watts has so grandly done in his hymn, "When I survey the wondrous cross," it is another to translate songs written in one style of poetry into another essentially different from it. As well translate *L'Allegro* into blank verse, or *Hamlet* into anapæstics.

Not only is such treatment of the psalms a literary absurdity—it is an irreverence. Whether is it the more reasonable in itself, the more just to the royal poet, and the more reverent to Sacred Scripture to manipulate these inspired songs into metres in order to adapt them to our modern tunes, or to adopt the primitive form of tune which preserves them in their Divine integrity?

Rhythmical lyrics like the Hebrew psalms and the Greek hymns, demand their own distinctive forms of music. Oddly enough this has come to be distinguished by the name of "chant," as if the singing of a rhythmical psalm were song, and the singing of a metrical hymn were not. If we sing a rhythmical psalm, common sense demands that we sing it to music adapted to it—that, for its unmetrical, irregular lines, we use a reciting note, which will cover as many words as may be required, ending the verse with a simple cadence. If we sing a metrical hymn, for the equal measures of which no reciting note is

needed, we use a metrical tune—a tune, that is, in which every syllable may be provided with its own proper note, and which, therefore, may be a cadence throughout—a melody as beautiful as the genius of the musician can furnish. What reason can there be in refusing to sing a rhythmical psalm to the music that gives the best expression to its meaning? What special religiousness or protestantism can there be in trochaic or iambic metres?

The chief reason for the demand of this is, that rhythmical psalms have generally been chanted in a confused regular manner. The Western Churches have been at so little pains to understand the very fundamental principle of their musical expression, that they have generally endeavoured to compress the recitative, however long, into the musical time of the semibreve, which stands for the reciting note. Hence the breathless helter-skelter, the decapitated words, the crushed-out sense, the huddled-up confusion, which are so often heard in liturgical services, to the utter destruction of all reverence and intelligence in worship, and the distress of all devout worshippers.

The metrical hymn-singing of the last generation was just as tumultuous, irreverent, and unintelligible—such tunes as Hampshire, Calcutta, Cranbrook, and Refuge, were as utterly destructive of distinct articulation and reverence. To sing them accurately, to adjust fugue and maintain harmony, to insert repetitions and tune, so as to prevent the parts from becoming entangled, when a thousand people were singing together—to drive steadily four such prancing and curvetting steeds, and to bring them safely to the end—was really a great feat, which only accomplished musicians and a stentorian choir could achieve. But such abuse of hymn-singing was never deemed a reason for its disuse. More wisely, reverent

men set about correcting it by urging the proper and reverent use, which happily is now so characteristic of our Churches. Let the rhythmical psalm be properly sung, and the flexibility of the chant will enable a more deliberate and reverent, a more articulate and emphatic, because a more natural expression, than even in the metrical hymn. In the metrical hymn, the exigencies of the tune will often compel the hurrying of words and the falsification of emphasis. In the rhythmical psalm, any time may be taken that the articulation of words and meaning may require ; words may be grouped, emphasis may be given according to the sense, all the delicate lights and shades of meaning may be perfectly and easily preserved.

In refusing, therefore, to sing the Bible psalms to their fitting music, simply because in the Romish and Anglican Churches they had been sung irreverently, our Puritan forefathers permitted themselves to be driven into an extreme, which was a far more serious impoverishment of worship-song than their interdict upon liturgies and organs ;—the latter were but modes, the former was part of the very substance of Divine song. We can only urge as their excuse, that they fought an arduous battle, and to save their citadel often had to rase their suburbs. Far more justifiable were they than some among ourselves, who make their necessity our choice, and determine that the beautiful suburbs of our sacred city shall continue to be desolate. They thought that the best corrective of abuse was disuse ; we continue to disuse, because indolence or blind tradition hinders us from justly determining the use. The conclusion of reason and common sense is, that we sing each kind of sacred song to the music that is adapted to it—a rhythmical psalm to an unmetrical chant—a metrical hymn to a metrical tune. It is equally preposterous to change the

form of the rhythmical psalm, that it may fit a metrical tune; and to change the form of a rhythmical chant, that it may fit a metrical hymn.

The question of liturgical forms of prayer is more difficult, and involves more complex and controversial considerations.

For one thing, it is almost impossible to divest it of polemical passion. Liturgies are virtually identified in England with Established Churches and Episcopal Church government;—it is assumed that they are part of the bondage imposed by the one, and the inseparable concomitants of the other. The latter assumption is, we believe, sustained by fact; no Episcopal Church has been without a liturgy; but the instance of the Established Church of Scotland shows that liturgies are not the invariable accompaniments of Establishments. Thus it has come to pass, that, in England, the controversy has been implicated with conflicting theories of Church government, and has rarely been restricted to the question of simple devotional expediency.

Again, with many persons, the very conception of liturgical prayer is limited to the Book of Common Prayer, as it is actually used in the Episcopal Church. But this is clearly to embarrass the real question at issue with mere accidental circumstances. There may be, and unquestionably there are, in State Establishments and in Episcopal Church constitutions, special affinities with liturgical forms; and to the Free Churches of Britain, who disallow both, this is a strong and not altogether unreasonable presumption against such forms; but the question of their expediency is pertinent under any conditions or forms of Church-life; and liturgies may be constructed and used upon principles very different from those involved in the Book of Common Prayer. If the question were simply an alternative, the Liturgy of the Established Church as

it is, or the free prayer of Presbyterian or Nonconforming Churches as it is, it would scarcely be necessary to debate it here. Probably there is no Nonconformist,—certainly there is no Nonconformist Church,—which would even hesitate in its preference for the latter. The uniform use of the Episcopal service is not the alternative to free prayer that we have to consider. Of all Church service books it includes the noblest elements and the most anomalous and incongruous forms. An accidental combination of three separate services imposes meaningless repetitions, and inordinate length. Its imposition, as the uniform service, is one of the miserable results of the Act of Uniformity—surely more fatally charged with elements of retribution upon its authors than any measure of ecclesiastical oppression that history records. With fatal infatuation, it seems to have been the chief solicitude of the Established Church of this country not only to exclude from her communion men of the most conscientious honesty, and of the noblest freedom of spiritual life, but also to disable herself from receiving into her worship any fresh inspirations of God, however transcendent, and from exercising any discretionary freedom, however desirable in itself, and however imperative changing circumstances might make its exercise. The devotional elevation and compass of the service-book of 1662 are its limit as well as its ideal of human perfection in worship.

But it is at any rate conceivable that liturgical forms might be used, including whatever is excellent in the Book of Common Prayer, and avoiding its incongruities, its monotonous repetitions, and its disabling exclusiveness. The rich materials which the devotional genius of Christendom has accumulated, including those which the Book of Common Prayer contains, might surely be combined into several distinct offices—each moderate in length, distinct in character, and yet general enough for com-

mon use—and which, at the discretion of the minister, might be used optionally, as hymns and psalms are used. There might be advantage in thus providing for the expression of such sentiments and necessities as are common to worshippers of all classes and of all generations, while ample opportunity was afforded for the embodiment in free prayer of the desires which special wants and circumstances produce.

This is the real alternative before us ; and it is the one which alone is worthy of consideration, in weighing the various arguments that are urged for and against liturgical forms. Neither advocacy should be embarrassed by any accidental accretions that may characterize any actual embodiment of either method.

The question can hardly be determined upon purely historic grounds.* It is one of those matters of general expediency, concerning which the precedents of history can have no absolute authority, although they may be serviceable by throwing upon it the guiding lights of experience.

The arguments of Wheatley† and others are based upon such pure, unscholarly assumptions, that they scarcely deserve serious refutation.

There is no certain proof of liturgical prayer in either the Jewish Temple or Jewish Synagogues. Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple itself, an extemporaneous prayer certainly, does not assume the use of a

* The historical evidence, as well as the general arguments *pro.* and *con.*, are well nigh exhausted in David Clarkson's *Discourse Concerning Liturgies*, 1689, and in Dean Comber's reply thereto,—A Scholastic History of the Primitive and General use of Liturgies in the Christian Churches. An admirable and dispassionate summary may also be found in Dr. Pye-Smith's *Comparative Advantages of Prescribed Forms and of Free Prayer in Public Worship*, 1821.

† *e.g.*, "I shall, by way of introduction, endeavour to prove three things,—First, that the ancient Jews, our Saviour, His Apostles, and the primitive Christians never joined (as far as we can prove) in any prayers, but precomposed set forms only. Secondly, that those precomposed set forms, in which they joined, were such as the respective congregations were accustomed to, and thoroughly acquainted with. Thirdly, that their principle warrants the imposition of a national precomposed Liturgy."—*Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer*. Introduction.

Temple liturgy, when he says, "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel,—then hear thou in heaven." (1 Kings viii. 38.) Nor, except the record of the Lord's Prayer, is there the slightest intimation in the New Testament of anything resembling a liturgical form; and for many reasons, both of internal character and of circumstance, to say nothing of Luke's differing version, it is difficult to imagine that our Lord intended it to be used liturgically in the Christian Church. Bingham* affirms that it was used as a form during the first century; but such an affirmation, without a particle of proof to sustain it, should scarcely be made by a man claiming the character of a historical student. Not a hint of its after use is found in the New Testament. Augustine† is surely right in maintaining that it was given as a model, rather than as a form of prayer. The Apostle Paul specifies topics for prayer (1 Tim. ii. 1), and speaks about the manner of prayer, and about improprieties in prayer (1 Cor. xi. 4, 5); but he never, in the remotest way, alludes to any form of prayer. He implies (1 Cor. xiv. 16) that at the close of each prayer the people said "Amen,"—but this is a presumption on the other side. All the recorded prayers of Apostolic history are clearly extemporary prayers, elicited by passing circumstances. It is, however, not necessary to deny the possible use of forms of prayer; it is enough to say that the positive evidence makes it certain that extemporary prayer was used, and that the proof that any liturgical form was used also, has yet to be adduced by those who affirm it.

We know that in the Churches of the Reformation, one of the chief means of instructing and edifying the half-informed people, was a plentiful use of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; these really constitute the

* Origines V. 125.

† Lib de Magistro, cap. i.

best liturgy of a Church ; and in their variety and musical use they are free from some of the grave objections that lie against forms of prayer. It is not probable that any forms were in use in Apostolic Churches, although it is clear that the utmost freedom and, probably, therefore, great diversity of practice, obtained among them. But it is clearly incumbent upon those who, like Wheatley, would, on the strength of Scriptural precedent, impose liturgical forms as the absolute rule of public worship, to prove, first, that there are unequivocal instances in New Testament history ; and, next, that these overrule the indisputable precedents of free prayer.

Nor is there any indication of the use of liturgical forms of prayer in the Apostolic or post-Apostolic fathers. Justin Martyr, describing the Christian worship of the second century, says, " On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities, or in the country, gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as time permits ; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things ; then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgiving *according to his ability*, and the people assent, saying Amen."*

Tertullian, describing the worship of the third century, says, " Thither we lift our eyes, with hands outstretched, because free from sin ; with head uncovered, for we have nothing whereof to be ashamed ; finally, without a monitor, because it is from the heart we supplicate."†

All this, however, constitutes no proof of the illegitimacy or even of the undesirableness of forms of public prayer,—

* Apol. I. cap. lxvii.

† Apol. cap. xxx.

it only proves the absence of precedent. The early Christians were in those circumstances of fresh, fervid, aggressive spiritual life, which, almost uniformly, have resented the restriction of forms, and have broken away from them when they existed; but it does not, therefore, follow that in circumstances of more settled and sedate spiritual life, forms were not employed. It is significant, however, that the first authentic intimation of the existence and use of liturgical forms of prayer occurs in a Canon of the Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397). That from this time liturgies rapidly came into general use admits of no question.* This, again, constitutes no imperative,—hardly a recommendatory precedent. The chief work of the last three centuries has been to liberate the Church from the superstitious and tyrannical impositions which, from the fourth century to the sixteenth, so fatally encumbered its action, and emasculated its strength. The manners and customs of the Mediæval Church are no more precedents for our modern Church-life, than are feudalism and serfdom for our modern civil life. Even that which might be best for the Church in former ages is not necessarily the best for it in this. With the fullest appreciation of the great elements of vital piety, social blessing, and missionary heroism, which the most casual student of the mediæval ages must recognize in the Mediæval Church, the general history and character of its religious life are not such as to constrain any eager emulation of its forms. If the Apostolic age, with its simplicity, purity, and success, affords no presumption in favour of liturgical forms, much less do the history and result of the twelve centuries that followed the establishment of the Church by Constantine. The experience which they contribute is of ominous significance, and compels very grave consideration before adopting their distinctive methods.

* Palmer's *Origines Liturgicæ*, vol. i. p. 10.

The Churches of the Reformation almost uniformly retained liturgical worship.* Luther constructed a liturgy for Germany, based upon the Missal of the Romish Church, excluding its unevangelical elements. Calvin prepared a liturgy for Geneva, which was generally adopted by the French Reformed Churches. Several liturgies were used by the Swiss Churches. The ancient Waldensian Church had its liturgy; so had the Reformed Dutch Church; so had the Churches of the Palatinate. Knox prepared a liturgy for the Churches of Scotland; and with Calvin, Beza, and other German reformers, took an active part in the preparation of the English Book of Common Prayer,—several important elements of which were their direct contribution. When the Puritans of Elizabeth's reign were compelled to reject the Episcopal Liturgy, on account of the Romish errors which it retained, they drew up, out of the Genevan form, a liturgy for their own use,—which "Form used at Geneva" was generally used by the fathers of English Nonconformity.†

Some of these liturgical forms, however, were only directories for the discretionary use of the ministers, and do not seem to have come into the hands of the congregations generally. At the Savoy Conference, in 1660, the twelve leading Nonconformist ministers, in their first address, declared themselves "satisfied in their judgments concerning the lawfulness of a liturgy or form of public worship." Baxter proposed his reformed liturgy as a basis of agreement; not to supersede the Book of Common Prayer, but as an alternative for the use of those who conscientiously objected to it,—at the same time tendering an illustrative list of exceptions.‡

The disuse of liturgies by the Nonconformist Churches of England, and by the Presbyterian Churches of Scot-

* See Baird on Liturgies.

† Strype's *Life of Grindal*, book i. chap. 10.

‡ Cardwell's *Conferences on the Book of Common Prayer*. Baxter's Works.

land, is not, therefore, any tradition of the Reformation, or of early Puritanism,—it has sprung from other and special causes.

That the deep, strong, devout life of these Churches has so entirely repudiated *all* liturgical forms, is a fact that has great significance in the consideration of the question,—especially as the reasons of it are not very difficult to discover. There can be no doubt that, generally speaking, it is the result of a slowly formed conviction, not shaped by precedents or theories, but the cumulative conclusion of manifold experience and observation. Almost uniformly, as they think, it has been found that the practical tendency of liturgical forms of prayer, has been a degeneracy, either into the mechanical ritualism of unintelligent forms, or into the symbolical ritualism of Sacramentarianism. It would be difficult to adduce a Church using an imposed liturgy, the devotional service of which has been kept simple and fervent. That both these forms of evil have been largely wrought in the English Establishment it would be impossible to deny; the painful monotony of parrot-like dialogues between parson and clerk is one of the most indelible memories of thousands driven by it to better things; and the developments of modern Sacramentarian symbolism, such as even Laud would never have ventured upon, have been the one prominent scandal of the Protestant Establishment for the last few years. Almost from the compilation of the first prayer-book of Edward VI., in 1548, the Puritans entertained the strongest repugnance to much contained in it; and this feeling, the ever-developing Sacramentarianism and ritual formalism of the Church confined. Nor is it otherwise in our own day. Even where the truest devotion exists, the enervating effect of constant reliance upon liturgical forms is evident. Who ever hears a clergyman offer opening prayer at a public meeting, who can eman-

cipate himself from the inevitable "Prevent us, O Lord, by Thy goodness," with the Lord's Prayer appended to it? Those, however, who would see to what extent both forms of degeneracy together can attain, have only to recal the services of the Romish Church in Italy or Spain,—these, however, far exceeded by the unintelligent volubility, and appalling irreverence of the services of the Greek Church in the East.* As with ideal theories of establishment, so with ideal theories of liturgical prayer, the actual realization hitherto has so uniformly disappointed expectation, that by Free Churches the theory itself has been discredited; and the conclusion reached, perhaps somewhat prematurely, that they are *per se* inimical to the purity and fervour of Church worship.

Another reason may be, that the natural instincts of Free Church life are opposed to all restrictions that are not absolutely necessary for good order and edification; and find therefore their most satisfactory embodiment in unpre-scribed prayer, with its ever fresh inspirations, its sense of reality, and its flexible adaptations to ever-changing circumstances. In spite of defects in literary form, and even of occasional infelicities of thought and feeling, which may somewhat impair devotional delicacy and conventional reverence, such prayer is felt to be a more natural, immediate, and earnest pleading of spiritual necessity. As in all things, it is, doubtless, a balance of advantages, but the Free Churches of Britain have hitherto preferred freedom and freshness of devotional expression, with all

* The writer was present at one of the Sunday services of the Greek Church in the Convent of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai. Not even the pretence of reverence was maintained, some twenty priests gabbled through the service with the utmost possible rapidity. Many of them were engaged in sundry duties, from which, like actors going on the stage to perform their part, they would rush to their places to utter the prescribed responses, ready, the moment the words had passed their lips for conversation, or to show the pictures of the church. The endless repetition of the Kyrie Eleison, had it not been such a mockery, would have been a mechanical marvel, so rapid was its articulation. And yet what wonder, when the old and prolix Greek Liturgy used has to be repeated eight times in every twenty-four hours.

its accidental disadvantages, to the more calculated propriety and authoritative limitation of prescribed forms, with the sense of mere formal, if not more restrained spiritual life, which is their inevitable accompaniment.

But, perhaps, the chief cause of the repudiation of all liturgies by the Free Churches of Britain has been the coercive uniformity attempted by the Established Church, and its hard intolerance of either preference or conscience, in those who could not receive the Romish elements of the Book of Common Prayer. Only those familiar with the history can conceive how scornfully and wantonly the slightest concessions, whereby comprehension might have been secured, were again and again refused. The earlier Nonconformists would have made any sacrifices, short of compromising conscience, for reunion with the Established Church. Once or twice in their history it seemed on the point of accomplishment, but with an infatuation that is inexplicable, save on the supposition of the old Greek proverb,

*"Οταν δε Δαίμων ἀνδρὶ πορσύνη κακὰ,
Τὸν γοῦν ἐβλάψε πρῶτον.*

concession only incited contemptuous demand. Concerning both the Convocation and the Parliament of 1662, Cardwell affirms that, "instead of any wish to admit Nonconformists to public power or privilege within the Church, there was a distinct and settled desire to restrain and exclude them." *

The truculent reply of Sheldon to Dr. Allen is well known. "Pity," said Allen, "you have made the door so strait." "Not at all," replied Sheldon; "had we supposed that so many would have conformed, we would have made it straiter." It was a well-known determination and saying on the Episcopal side, "We'll make them knaves if they conform." Baxter was always in favour

* Conferences, pp. 387, 388.

of a national State Church.* Calamy would gladly have conformed;† so he tells us would probably two-thirds of the Dissenters of his day.‡ Howe, Bates, and others pleaded for reasonable comprehension; but the Episcopal authorities were as supercilious as they were uncompromising. South preached at Oxford against comprehension one of his most virulent sermons, comparing the admission of Dissenters to “permitting a thief to come into the house to avoid the noise and trouble of his knocking at the door.” (Ser. xxxiv.) The last opportunity for comprehension was lost, and England and the Church were spared from what would probably have been a great damage and disaster to their noblest life and liberties.

It requires but little knowledge of human nature to understand how this stubborn intolerance of itself sufficed to provoke the sturdy spirit of independence, and resistance to tyranny, which has ever been so characteristic of Englishmen generally, and of English Nonconformists in particular. Even in things indifferent they would hardly have submitted under such conditions. With their conscientious objections to the Book of Common Prayer, submission was impossible; and they summarily rejected altogether, what under less inflexible and arrogant conditions they probably would have consented to use. The moral which, come when it may, the deposition of the Episcopal Church as a National Establishment will point is, that exaggerated assumption always thus defeats its own ends. Men will freely concede even serious things, if considerately asked, when they will refuse to surrender even the fringe of their phylactery if it be imperiously demanded. The most fatal blunder that absolute authority can make is, so to proscribe, as to make the maintenance of what is proscribed a matter of either conscience or liberty.

* Baxter's National Churches. † Own Life, vol. i p. 207. ‡ Calamy's Baxter, p. 655.

Then, again, no mere forms, however ample or excellent, can ever suffice for the expression of all the experiences and necessities of men's spiritual life. Churches of spiritual men, full of living fervour, and having urgent and changing necessities, will crave fitting and flexible expression for them. Every minister, moreover, will bring to the conduct of public worship some more predominant mood or feeling, either the inspiration of his own spiritual experience, the suggestion of the sermon he has prepared, or of the Scripture that he has read ; the burden of special circumstances of the week, the subtle influence and bias of the assembly before him, or the inspiration and touch of the Holy Spirit. His supreme power as leader of the devotions of the people depends, not upon the fervour that he can throw into precomposed forms, nor upon the common prayer to which he gives expression ; it depends upon his own special inspiration of thought and feeling. Thus inspired, he pours out before God his very inmost soul, and in so doing he touches the devotional heart of the people much more deeply, and carries them with him to God far more fervently and effectively, than would be possible by any mere reading of a liturgy. Both in preaching and in prayer, such touches of the Holy Spirit of God, such inspirations of special fervours, and not his ordinary moods, are the real power of a minister. To put upon all this an absolute interdict, to drive back the yearning, struggling feelings of the leader of Congregational devotions, compelling them to clothe themselves in words that have no special appropriateness, or that express a feeling altogether different, is to restrain or disallow all inspiration of God's Spirit, and to deny to the man the very primary conditions of efficiency. What can more inevitably doom him to mediocrity and formalism ? Whatever special fervours may fill him ; whatever circumstances of the times, or necessities of the congregation may urge

him, he must imprison his feelings and desires in the calm, stately, generalized, and inflexible words of three centuries ago. Just in proportion as Churches and ministers realize devout fervours of spiritual life, and the Divine significance of common experiences, they will be impatient of general expression and exclusive restriction. It is the necessity of strong, fervent, broad religious life, that it should be able to give utterance to special moods, experiences, and circumstances, which no forms can possibly anticipate or particularize. What can be more unnatural, or unreal, than the imposition of one general form of devotion upon men of all generations, and of all varieties of character and experience.

Public prayer, moreover, is designed to excite devotional feeling, as well as to express it. As words are uttered, the spiritual desires of devout men are enkindled and enlarged, so as to fill out their meaning. No premeditation of familiar forms, for the sake of preparing feeling, can accomplish this; it needs the excitement of the worshipping act. The ideal of prayer is higher than any actual expressions of it, and the inspiration of forms is feeble compared with that of fresh, living, struggling thoughts and words. On the other hand, many who use liturgies in public worship, and who cannot for a moment be suspected of inferior devotional life and fervour, are almost inordinately attached to them. The Roman Catholic Church has nurtured some of the devoutest men that the world has seen. We can only, therefore, speak of the general tendencies of systems, freely admitting the force and value of exceptional instances. It is notorious, that in the Episcopal Church some of the most ingenuous and devout of its members, weary of the monotonous reiteration of the Liturgy, lose the apprehensive sense of its meanings, and causelessly upbraid themselves for defective devotional feeling; the feet of the soul in-

continently slide over the smooth surface of the well-worn words. On the other hand, we have frequent complaints of the tediousness, and common place, and lack of variety in free prayer. Is it possible in any Church to realize the ideal of worshipping men? Is it not as inevitable as it is salutary that men should always be desiring something better than they have? It is, however, only proper to observe, that the desire for liturgical services in Free Churches is not often expressed by the people. Whatever the wishes of individuals here and there, there can be no doubt that public sentiment, as a whole, is strongly opposed to liturgical forms, and very greatly prefers free prayer, with all its admitted drawbacks. It is by ministers that the craving for help in devotional services is more commonly felt. It is natural that the burden of the people's prayers, which the minister carries to God, should be felt by him to be heavier than even the burden of God's message to the people. If the minister be a man of elevated and tender spiritual feeling, this must be the case; if he be not, no doubt the tendency of free prayer is to become cold, formal, and monotonous. A minister has not merely to embody, in an address to the Almighty, his own thoughts and feelings; through them, and through his varied knowledge of human character and experience, he has to embody in an address to the Almighty the thoughts and feelings of others; to enter, as it were, the confessional of their souls, and express for them to God their various wants and moods; and if, either through lack of spiritual fervour, or of sympathetic imagination, he fail to do this, as sometimes even the most efficient will fail, the conduct of public prayer will be to him an intolerable burden. But this is the responsibility laid upon him, and he may no more evade it by liturgical prayers than he may, by reading homilies, evade the analogous respon-

sibility of preaching. Woe be to us if we seek to relieve responsibility by lowering its standard. With a true and earnest man, the very agony and struggle will be more efficient in preparing him for his work than the most fluent eloquence.

Both methods of conducting public worship have characteristic excellencies and characteristic defects, and under differing circumstances would produce very different results. The perils of a partial use of forms are, first, that the least spiritual and earnest would be the most tempted to shelter their inadequacy under them, and to substitute them inordinately for free prayer, instead of being incited to greater effort. Where, in ministers or in Churches, spiritual life runs lowest, liturgies proffer the best expedients, and as a matter of fact are most commonly resorted to; while the disposition to use them generally diminishes in proportion as spiritual life and intelligence grow. And, next, the natural tendency in using in the same service two such different and almost incompatible tongues, would be to provoke unconscious and invidious comparison, to foster a painful feeling of incongruity, and thus gradually for the one to supersede the other.

The advantage of partial forms is, that those who the most religiously and painfully seek to lead their congregations to the Divine mercy-seat, would be relieved, if such relief be desirable, were they able to diminish the five or six prayers of the two Sunday services by such short liturgical forms, as with propriety, fulness, and chastened reverence would express the common thanksgivings and desires of all worshipping men. No doubt the most perfect of all public prayer is, when gifted and devout men in their highest moods of devotional inspiration pour out their souls to God; perhaps the most perfect preaching is, the extemporized eloquence of in-

spired moments ; neither is a reason for neglecting, to say the least, most careful preparation.

The combination of both methods in the way we have suggested has never yet been fairly tried ; but on all hands it would be conceded that for such special services as marriages and funerals, when an accidental discomposure or incongruity, such as even the most self-possessed and able are liable to, might turn a serious service into burlesque, or painfully jar upon the sensitive heart of sorrow, prepared forms are, to say the least, most desirable.

There is nothing in the constitution or traditions of Congregational Churches, or in the feeling of the community generally, to hinder any individual Church disposed to do so from trying the experiment, or to prejudice it in public esteem if it do so. As a simple matter of fact, the Churches that do use liturgies may be counted upon the fingers, and almost uniformly the suggestion of their use is summarily rejected. The Churches of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and those of the Wesleyans, which originally used the Liturgy of the Episcopal Church, have very generally discontinued it. The question, however, is one of pure expediency, which each Church should be left to determine for itself. In the varieties of Christian life and culture to be found in the Church of the living God throughout the world, that may be the best for one congregation, which is far from being the best for another. Why should all congregations worship alike ? In the noble franchise of true spiritual life, it is sufficient that each be fully persuaded in its own mind, and offer to God its sacrifice of praise with such words, and in such forms, as may the best express and excite its own devout feeling. That it is desirable to realize the maximum of Common Prayer in every congregation, is the axiom from which both parties will start ;

but it does not follow that the best means of securing this is the consentaneous utterance of liturgical words ; with both reason and plausibility it might be maintained that the monotonous use of familiar words has a tendency to act upon devotional feeling as a sedative rather than as a stimulant, and that its best incitement is the fresh utterance of the petitions and sentiments of free prayer. Assuredly the recitation of a congregation has no value in itself. The question therefore remains, which of these methods of public prayer, looking at worship in its broadest and most spiritual aspects and results, is most conducive to that which is the essence and only worth of all worship, the excitement and expression of the worshipping heart of the congregation.

In this Essay, only general principles have been discussed, the historic development and religious vicissitudes of Church-worship have not been entered upon ; nor has the attempt been made to supply any directory of worship, by the specification of particular rubrics of Congregational song and prayer,—such as the characteristics of hymn and music, and Congregational habit which are essential to effective Church song ; or the methods of ministerial preparation, the devotional arrangements, and the Congregational habit which are most conducive to effective public prayer. The topics included under these particulars are manifold, and their discussion would involve far more space than could be accorded to them in this volume. But general principles, if intelligently apprehended, and conscientiously applied, will suffice to suggest all of rubrical direction that it may be desirable to insist upon.

We have spoken, moreover, only of methods and expedients of worship, and of the ministry of these to the devout soul. We have assumed the fundamental essential of all worship,—the devout soul itself, the heart that

thirsts for the living God. No forms of worship however beautiful and reverent, no emotions however fervid or sentimental that hymn or symbol, liturgy or devotional eloquence can inspire, have any power to create this, or in any way to furnish a substitute for it. The spiritual man is born of God, and worship is but the devotional act of his spiritual life. It therefore pre-supposes the life,—the life that craves communion with God, and that only communion with God can sustain. Forms and attitudes of life are of little importance compared with life itself. Our only solicitude concerning them, therefore, is that they give the freest expression to the manifold forces of life, and re-act upon these so as to develop them to the utmost. If the life be fervent and devout, no forms can be to it of other than subordinate importance. And such are the varieties of life, that devotional feeling has found its highest expression and nurture in forms the most contrasted,—in the mute waiting before God of the Quaker, in the harsh discords of the ascetic Puritan, in the noisy turbulence of the Revivalist, in the restrained stateliness of the English Episcopalian, and in the effeminate and gorgeous symbolism of the Sacramentarian or Romanist. Failing to recognize Divine prescription in forms or modes of worship, we must regard them as matters of pure expediency to be determined upon general principles of human nature, spiritual life, and social circumstance. We must, therefore, concede to every Church the most absolute right to determine its own forms of worship, subject only to those general criticisms which are applicable to all human thoughts and things. History can guide us, not by authoritative precedent, only by illustrating tendencies and recording results. We may argue against systems in the light of general principles, but clearly no man has any

right to make his preferences or expediencies the law of another man's conscience. For both individuals and Churches there is but one valid law, viz.,—that so far as is practicable, each shall embody its worship in such modes and forms as are the best adapted to its own life. Of worship itself there is but one great use and end,—that it bring a brotherhood of men to the feet and heart of the great Father in heaven—there to speak to the eager sympathy of His love, all their adoration, and all their desire.

THE CONGREGATIONALISM

OF

THE FUTURE.

BY THE

REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A. LOND.



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THAT the Congregationalism of the future will, in many important respects, differ from that of the past is a prediction which may be very safely ventured. There is a spirit abroad which will affect, more or less, all our ecclesiastical systems, and it is not to be expected, nor indeed desired, that Congregationalism alone should remain unchanged. It has been to so large an extent a teacher of others, that it may well be content to become a learner in its turn. Of all systems it has the least sympathy with a Conservatism, which resists all attempts at progress, and forgetful of the wants of the living present, slavishly abides by the traditions of the past. It boasts of its freedom, it owns no deference to authority however venerable, it recognizes in the fullest manner the rights of the individual conscience, and unless its professions be mere words, and its practice out of harmony with its theory, it must be prepared to enlarge and modify many of its views, as the growth of opinion or the difference of circumstances may require. Without the compromise of any essential prin-

ciple, great changes may be made in its modes of action, and no discredit is cast on the work of former generations when it is said that such changes must be made if it is to exercise its proper influence on the future religious life of the nation.

Its history, moreover, prepares us to expect that it may have some features attributable to the peculiar circumstances by which its character has been shaped, which may require adaptation to an altered state of things. It has hitherto been viewed as the religion of a sect, and a sect placed at great social disadvantage, lying outside the national life, shut out from the national seats of learning, and thus deprived by the action of the legislature of a most precious part of the inheritance of Englishmen. A writer in a recent number of the "*Contemporary Review*," with a remarkable want of generosity, and with an arrogance which is the fault rather of the system than of the man, says: "The fact clearly is, that Dissenters chose to separate themselves from the general current of the national life, and thus imbibed what Mr. Matthew Arnold would call a provincial tone, which caused a mutual repugnance between them and those who represented a higher culture. We do not deny that this repugnance may have been heightened by a flavour of ecclesiastical intolerance, nor again, that the provinciality of Dissenters was increased by their exclusion from the national universities." Mr. Matthew Arnold has much to answer for, for having forged a class of weapons which are likely to embitter controversies, without contributing at all to their settlement. To tell a man that he has a provincial tone or is a religious Philistine, proves nothing except the self-complacency of the speaker, but it is very likely to foster an irritating self-conceit on the one side, and to provoke a natural resentment on the other, in the last degree unfavourable to

the dispassionate consideration of any argument advanced by either. Here, however, the gravamen of the offence is, that Dissenters are taunted with the consequences of a position which was forced upon them by the very party from whom the taunts come. There is a singular oblivion of history in the assertion that "Dissenters chose to separate themselves from the general current of the national life." No doubt they chose to accept all the social, intellectual and political consequences of Nonconformity, rather than subscribe to a creed they did not believe; but to represent the position into which they were thus forced by unjust laws, as the result of their determination to separate themselves from the rest of the nation, is to aggravate the original injury. The isolation to which they doomed themselves was the penalty of fidelity to conscience, and they were content to accept it rather than be unfaithful. If they imbibed a provincial tone, it is hardly wonderful when we consider that for a long time they were banished from all the scenes of national life and activity, that they were not permitted to sit in Parliament, that even the poor honour of aiding in the government of the towns in which they lived was denied, that, as far as law could do it, they were denationalized, and that, even now, though these political disabilities have been removed, they are still deprived of those rewards of high culture which, in many cases, they have shown themselves quite able to win. So far from their having been indifferent to culture, they have done much to make up for the loss of those educational advantages to which they were entitled as citizens, and if social barriers had not separated men of the "highest culture" from them, it might have been found that their deficiencies, except in those minute points of scholarship, which only academic training can supply, were not so great as they appeared when viewed from those lofty heights which their critics assume to occupy. That in some points they

have been rigid, narrow and exclusive, may be true ; but if the charge were a great deal truer than it is, the fact that it is urged by the upholders of the Establishment, only furnishes a fresh illustration of the old fable of the wolf and the lamb.

The last thirty years have witnessed a marked change. The concession of political rights has been followed by a change in social, and to some extent even in ecclesiastical relations. A party within the Established Church, influential rather because of their high character and ability than of their numbers, have sought to break down the walls of separation which the bigotry and passion of former times had raised, and to welcome Dissenters as members of the great Christian commonwealth, having equal rights and privileges with themselves. All these things have wrought a different feeling in the minds of Dissenters. But they are of a date too recent, and are as yet confined to too limited a circle, to have exercised their full influence upon the spirit and views of the general body of Nonconformists, who are still largely under the influence of feelings produced by the treatment which they have received for centuries at the hands of the dominant party, which in many districts they receive to this day, and which has created an alienation between Churchmen and Dissenters that has been injurious to both. Unfortunately,—and quite as much so for the party that prides itself upon its aristocratic supporters as for its opponents,—the forces of fashion and rank have all been arrayed on the side of the former, and the latter have had to bear an amount of social indignity and contempt which, if not more trying, has certainly been more irritating than actual persecution. Practically, the intercourse between the two parties has been of the most restricted character. Individual friendships there have been, but there has been none of that general intercourse

which would have enabled each to understand better and to respect more thoroughly the motives and principles of the other. Multitudes of Churchmen believe that in "Salem Chapel" they have a faithful portraiture of the majority of Dissenting Churches; that the members of those Churches are a set of vulgar buttermen and grocers, who find in the chapel a fitting theatre for the display of their insolence and ignorance; that their ministers are like those who choose them; and that if a man of refinement and culture should by any chance be found in their pulpits, his life is soon made miserable by the insufferable presumption of the petty tyrants at whose pleasure he holds his position.

"The country parson" (we are told by the "Pall Mall Gazette," an authority which will not be suspected of Nonconformist leanings) "regards the Dissenter as the squire regards the poacher, as a kind of unreasonable and almost unnatural phenomenon. But everywhere to belong to a Dissenting body is to be marked with a badge of social inferiority." In Church circles, we learn from the same source, "the present ideal of a Dissenting minister, which is often far enough from the reality, is that of an unctuous Stiggins, in a limp white tie, quite unfit for social intercourse with gentlemen, and with an intellect only cultivated enough to frighten a cheating shopkeeper with vivid descriptions of hell fire." An impartial judge would possibly say that there is as much of a provincial tone on the part of those by whom such ideas are entertained, as is to be found even in the bigotries of uncultivated dissent, but there can be as little doubt that the witness is true, as that the result of such a state of feeling has been to intensify the sectarianism of both parties. Arrogance has begotten a resentment, which has sought to make the line of demarcation as wide as possible. As the noble leaders of the

Dutch Revolution gloried in the name of "Gueux," so Dissenters have learned to pride themselves on the dissidence of their Dissent, and to glory in the possession of a name which certainly has not a very pleasant sound, and does not indicate the position which a man of catholic spirit would desire to occupy. They have on their own side hardly been more liberal than their opponents. The story of the man who said that he had been a Methodist, an Independent, and a Baptist, but had at length resolved to give up all religion and go to the Church of England, is, it is to be feared, a faithful reflection of the ideas which prevail among a class, rapidly diminishing, indeed, but still too numerous. Even among those of better culture and more Christian spirit, we may often find an ignorance of their neighbours almost as great as their neighbours' ignorance of them, and a consequent inability to appreciate the high qualities which are nurtured by the influence of a system different from their own.

The existence of an Established Church has been the main cause of this state of feeling. "Dissent" (to quote the "Pall Mall Gazette" again) "is, it may be, a bad thing, but the great argument against an Establishment is, that without it there would be no Dissent." The intensity of Dissenting feeling will be determined to a large extent by the character of the Establishment, but the mere fact of its existence creates a sense of injustice in the minds of those whom conscience keeps outside its pale, and that feeling is necessarily intensified where the sin of Dissent is visited with the penalty of social ostracism. Men who are treated as pariahs are not very likely to bear their grievance meekly, or be very ready to renounce their own peculiarities in order to conciliate those at whose hands they suffer this wrong. The feeling has been diminished with each successive advance that has been made in the direction of equality,

and it is therefore reasonable to expect that when the work is complete, and the connection between the Church and the State entirely dissolved, it will gradually give place to a more Christian sentiment.

Much as the last thirty years have effected in the way of improving the relations between different parties, far more is to be hoped from the coming twenty. The settlement of political questions, in which Dissenters are immediately concerned, must have the effect of breaking down some of the strongest barriers to mutual intercourse. If ecclesiastical controversy were removed altogether from the political arena, as will be the case when perfect religious equality is established,—and every year is doing something to bring us to this point,—there would be no reason why Churchman and Tory, Dissenter, and Liberal should be almost interchangeable terms. Where there is no Established Church there will, of course, be no Dissenters. Episcopalians and Congregationalists will be arrayed in political parties, altogether irrespective of their ecclesiastical relations. Religious differences will not be complicated and embittered by an unnatural connection with political strife, and a better understanding will prevail between Christian communities, whose rivalry need no longer have in it anything of hostility.

In this altered state of things, Congregationalism will have a new problem to solve. The immediate social effect of disestablishment, whenever it may come, may possibly not be very great; but in changing the status of Congregationalism, it is likely to effect an alteration in the conditions of its existence. It has hitherto derived a certain power even from its antagonistic, or as its enemies would say, sectarian position, and it has grown despite its defects and the bitter opposition it has had to meet, in virtue partly of its identification with the cause of political progress and liberty, and partly because of the

chivalrous loyalty with which many have clung to an unfashionable and despised system. But when it has no longer this kind of sentiment to which to appeal, will it be able, in an era when mere sectarianism is at a discount, and it will have to rely on its merits, not on its traditions, to rise to the dignity of the occasion, and to reveal so much of a true catholic spirit as will enable it to retain and even to improve its position ?

The observant mind must discover many indications on every side of the tendency of ecclesiastical parties towards Congregationalism—many proofs that it affords the only true solution of the difficulties under which various Churches are suffering. It is, in truth, a spiritual democracy, and the spirit of the age is intensely democratic in Church as well as in State. We find continually Episcopalians who are proud of their hierarchy, of its antiquity, its social position, its great influence in the nation, and, perhaps of individual men belonging to it, who, nevertheless, talk as lightly of the authority of bishops as the most extreme Independent. They like the prestige which belongs to Episcopacy, and feel as though, to some extent, it belonged to themselves ; they are strongly attached to the Liturgy, which they regard as the inseparable accompaniment of Episcopalianism ; but in their desire for freedom of action, in their chafing against all restraint, in their determination to have a larger share in the management of their own affairs, they are continually talking Congregationalism, though in blissful unconsciousness of the fact. Church Congresses are hardly less democratic, so far as religious work is concerned, than Congregational Unions, and the most popular speakers in them are, for the most part, those who boldly assail authority and insist on the recognition of the rights of the laity. There is less of this tendency apparent in Churches which, like the Presbyterian in

Scotland, and the Methodist in our own country, form great organizations, possessed not only of the semblance but of the reality of power; but those familiar with their internal controversies are fully conscious of the difficulties that constantly arise when the central authority comes into collision with local feelings, of the slight deference which is then shown to names and institutions which would once have been all-powerful, and of the intense cravings for popular self-government which unexpectedly reveal themselves. Philosophic observers outside all Churches recognize the strength of the influences which are thus at work, and prophesy that Congregationalism must be the prevalent Church system of the future with a confidence which many even of its most attached adherents,—unable to comprehend fully the extent to which it is leavening society outside its own circle,—would hesitate to express. There are many who feel that it supplies the only effectual defence against hierarchical assumption. They shrink from the idea of becoming Congregationalists, because of their repugnance to much in the present working of their system, of which they have got most erroneous and exaggerated conceptions, derived either from their own very imperfect observation, or from the representations of others who have looked at it entirely from the outside, or, worst of all, from those who, for various reasons, have forsaken its ranks, and who judge of it from an experience, whose lessons have been coloured by feelings of bitter personal disappointment; but they have, nevertheless, considerable sympathy with its distinctive principles, and are inclining to a closer association with it. Some of their objections would doubtless be removed by a more accurate knowledge, but there are others which could only be met by certain changes in our practice; and one of the most important questions for the future is,—Are Congrega-

tional Churches prepared so to modify their modes of action as to take advantage of the sentiment in favour of their system which appears to be daily gaining ground ?

That there are defects in the present modes of working, the most earnest champion of things as they are will hardly be prepared to deny. Indeed, the tendency amongst Congregationalists is rather to exaggerate than to diminish or conceal them. The spirit of freedom, which is the very life of their Churches, naturally disposes to keen and sometimes even severe criticism of the faults supposed to exist amongst them. They too have shared largely in the tendency to movement, which is the characteristic of the age, and which disposes many to believe that, in the experience of other Churches, they may find the wisdom which will help them to correct the evils of which they are painfully conscious in their own. They have absorbed into themselves seceders from other communities, on whom, of course, the influence of their traditions exercises but little power, who perhaps have accepted their principles without being at all committed to their special applications, and who are desirous of introducing among them some of the ideas and practices which have been found useful in the Churches which they have left. It has been a matter of complaint with some that the recent meetings of the Congregational Union have been marked by a spirit so revolutionary, that it seemed to proceed on the idea that there is nothing in our principles and institutions which can be regarded as definitely settled, but that everything is in a state of fusion, waiting to be cast into any new shape which men with Presbyterian or Methodist or Plymouth Brethren proclivities may desire to give it. Certainly some of the severest censures which have been passed on Congregationalism have been heard in its own assemblies, and have come from some of its most zealous friends. If there is

a proved necessity for reform, it will not have to encounter the opposition of a determined Conservatism on the part of the leaders, prepared, in defiance of all evidence to the contrary, to maintain that whatever is, is right. The danger lies rather in the disposition to impute to the system evils which arise out of the imperfections of the men by whom it is worked, and to suppose that it is possible to effect, by a mere improvement in machinery, that which can be accomplished only by a radical change in human nature. We know the ills we have, and sometimes are inclined to think them greater than they really are, forgetful of the fact that they exist under a different form, in the very systems, the adoption of whose plans, it is supposed, might secure to us an immunity from them. We have no desire to meet the charges sometimes made against Congregationalism by retorted accusations against its accusers; and if there be any cure for admitted errors, we should be most ready to accept it; but it is necessary to guard against the idea that absolute perfection can be attained in any system, and to be careful lest the means employed for the repression of proved abuses should introduce others of a different and not less serious character, and at the same time take away valuable elements of great strength which we at present possess.

One of the first points to which Congregationalists have to look is, undoubtedly, the cultivation of a more catholic spirit, by which is meant not merely that universal charity which would prompt them to honour the conscientious differences of men from whom they are most widely separated, and to seek a thorough and hearty co-operation with all, but also a disposition to bring themselves, as far as may be practicable in consistency with their principles, into harmony with the majority of the Christian world. The very idea of Catholicity has been brought into contempt by men who are for ever insisting

upon proper deference to Catholic tradition, and attempting to introduce all sorts of innovations into the Anglican doctrine and ritual on the plea that it is Catholic. Their endeavour to overbear individual judgment, and to interfere with the complete supremacy of Scripture by appeals to Catholic antiquity, has tended to strengthen the sentiment of antagonism and of isolation already sufficiently powerful and mischievous. But this miserable travesty of the name and the idea must not lead us to despise Catholicity itself, or to think it a small thing that we should be separated, often by small peculiarities, from other Christian communities.

There are, unfortunately, numbers of Dissenters who are anything but catholic—who are, on the contrary, intensely sectarian, especially in their feeling towards the Established Church, who are so far from regretting the divisions of Christian brethren, that they are more disposed to exaggerate and to widen them, than to soften, and, if possible, heal them, who would strenuously resist every attempt to modify peculiarities in their own system, and regard a proposal to adopt any of the usages of the Established Church as a sign of disloyalty to Nonconformist principles. The absurd extent to which this is carried in some quarters would be almost incredible did we not know how soon very small matters become symbolic of party distinctions, and what supreme importance is attached by the antagonistic parties in the Anglican Church itself, to things that really have no significance, except such as is derived from their association with a particular class of opinions. Thus the question of Gregorian music would seem, at first sight, one that ought to be and might be decided on purely æsthetic grounds. That Popish doctrine should lurk in the cadence of a particular style of chant, is a mystery which the uninitiated fail to penetrate, but as it is at present, the

sweet but somewhat monotonous strains of Gregorian music in a church may be accepted as an infallible evidence of its "high" tendencies. Seldom, if ever, has any religious party exhibited a hatred of every practice that may have found favour in the eyes of its adversaries which approached more closely to absolute fanaticism than that which the Evangelicals have shown in relation to Ritualistic novelties. However innocent the proposed change might seem in itself,—however agreeable to the law of their own Church,—however calculated even to correct some acknowledged abuse, the mere fact that it was an innovation suggested by Tractarians was sufficient to cause its indignant rejection. Nor are the Evangelicals alone in this; the High Churchmen and Broad Churchmen have their own pet fancies and pet aversions, and all cling to their special party-badges and symbols without much regard to Catholic unity.

We can scarcely be surprised, then, that Nonconformists should jealously guard their traditional practices, and be unwilling to accept anything which appears like an act of submission to a Church from which they have dissented. It may be true that their fathers had reason for a disuse of some particular practice which no longer exists. It may possibly be that they have themselves departed from the course of their fathers, who were more in harmony with the Church than with them on the point. Or it may be that, though some custom of their own which they are asked to give up has been consecrated by the sanction of antiquity, and is in harmony with all the traditions of Dissenters, it really has no valid reason to urge on its behalf. But not the less are many prepared to resist to the last any change which looks like a concession made to the Anglican Church. Everyone who is acquainted with the inner life of Dissenting Churches must know innumerable cases in which every

argument in favour of change is supposed to be conclusively met by the assertion, that to adopt it would be to become more like the Established Church. The response of a congregation at the close of a prayer by an audible "Amen," the repetition of the Lord's Prayer by the people after the minister, the singing of the "Te Deum" or the "Gloria," would seem to be as innocent and unobjectionable practices as can easily be conceived, yet there are multitudes who decline even to discuss the question of their expediency, and resist their introductions as innovations which would be fatal to the consistency and purity of their Church, for no better reason than that they are in use in the Established Church. There have been several instances in which the peace of a Church has been seriously disturbed, in consequence of attempts to improve the character of the worship, by expedients so simple as these. The opposition to the chanting of psalms and passages of Scripture is still more unintelligible from the Nonconformist point of view. Dissenters have always been distinguished by their reverence for God's Word, and there seems, therefore, to be strange inconsistency in their objection to use the inspired words in their songs of praise, with the notion that by employing hymns they escape the taint of Romanism or Anglicanism. Strange to say, on the opposite side, an excessive use of hymns appears to be becoming a sign of Ritualism, and we may expect to see the Evangelicals regarding them with suspicion. Looked at, abstractedly, however, the opposition to the chanting of psalms on the ground of a principle is a peculiarity of Dissenting life which can be traced to nothing but strong antipathy to Anglican practices. It has not a vestige of argument to allege in its favour, and is at best a mere traditional prejudice which would soon yield to the influence of a more truly catholic spirit. There might, of course, still be Churches who would

hesitate to adopt the practice in their own worship on grounds of expediency, but theirs is an entirely different position from that of those who object to chant the psalms, not because it is difficult for a congregation to render them effectively, but because it is disloyal to Dissenting principles to chant them at all—an objection which, it must frankly be expressed, is nothing more than an expression of sectarian narrowness.

We do not, of course, assert that one style of singing is more catholic than another; but we do insist that the spirit which treats all these questions as mere points between Churchmen and Dissenters, on which a loyal Dissenter must abide by a foregone conclusion, is eminently uncatholic and sectarian, and as such calculated to injure the interests of Christ's kingdom at large, and to interfere with the efficient action of the particular community in which it prevails. It is not necessary to contend that the changes advocated are in all instances wise and expedient, in order to show that the ground on which they are opposed is wrong. The assumption on which the whole argument rests is, that there are a certain number of our fellow Christians (if indeed the tenor of the reasoning would not deny them that character altogether) to whom we should seek to be as unlike as possible, and, therefore, that if there are any customs prevalent amongst them we are at once absolved from the necessity of inquiring whether they are Scriptural in principle or have been shown to be wise in their action, by the mere fact that they are theirs, for that alone decides that they cannot and shall not be ours. Such a spirit must be exorcised before Congregationalism can ever fully develop its strength. The absence of certain features to which they have been accustomed in the worship is itself sufficient to repel many who might otherwise have been attracted by the freedom and simplicity of the Congregational system; but this is

a small point as compared with the reason for which these features are excluded. They are in search of what is free, generous, and catholic, and they are met by the very exclusiveness from which they are trying to escape.

Any community which aspires to be more than a sect must cultivate a very different temper. Where there is true catholicity, a man feels that it is his misfortune to be compelled to differ from his brethren, and though this will never induce him to abandon a single principle, it will make him desirous to reduce these differences as far as practicable both in number and in the prominence which is assigned to them. Individuality it is undesirable to sink, for that would be to abandon independence of judgment, with all the advantages which have accrued from it; but such individuality need not be exaggerated nor introduced into subjects on which there may fairly be concessions to taste and even to old association, in order to secure united action.

In the changes that have already been effected, we have some warrant for the anticipation that increased catholicity may fairly be expected to be the result of religious equality. A certain class of Churchmen are fond of pointing to the reforms that have been effected in the architecture, in Church music, and in the modes of worship amongst Dissenters, as proofs of an altered sentiment, and a growing tendency to the adoption of their system; but it would be more correct to quote them as beneficial results of the altered social and political relations of the two classes. The two movements—the one towards the assertion of political equality, and the other towards a greater catholicity of view in relation to diversities of ritual—have advanced *pari passu*. In former times when restrictions were numerous, and each of them was maintained by the dominant party as essential to the

preservation of its supremacy, there hardly could be any relations but those of antagonism. Superiority on the mere ground of ecclesiastical position was vehemently asserted on the one side, and as vehemently resisted on the other, and as the natural consequence there was an unwillingness on the part of the weaker party to appear to confess this inferiority by adopting the ideas of their opponents. With the removal of the cause it may reasonably be anticipated that the effect will cease. The influences of early association and conservative instincts, which have their place even in those whose principles might be expected to secure an exemption from them, will be quite sufficient to prevent a perfectly dispassionate consideration of any reform that may be proposed; but it may be hoped that the judgment will not be further warped by so unworthy a sentiment as a mere determination to maintain dissimilarity for its own sake. The annihilation of such a feeling, and the awakening in its stead of a desire to attain to as much of agreement with other Christians as possible, would in itself work an entire revolution in the tone of controversy and in the general relations of opposing parties to each other, which could not fail to be attended with the happiest effects.

The Ritualists, it must be confessed, have taught all parties a lesson in this respect. They have claimed for themselves a freedom that to an outsider seems scarcely compatible with obedience to the laws of their own Church, and in the exercise of it they have endeavoured to graft upon their system plans which seemed to be good and successful, and at the same time not inconsistent with their own catholic principles, in the practices of other Churches. They have borrowed largely from Methodism, as well as from Romanism; and though they have sometimes caricatured the usages they have introduced, there has been no unwillingness to forsake

old paths, when they could find new ones which promised to conduct them more rapidly and certainly to the goal which they have in view. So little sympathy have they with the stately dignity hitherto associated with High-Churchism, that they have been ready to avail themselves of any or every expedient which seemed likely to secure a greater amount of popular sympathy and attention. They have had recourse to the preached instead of the written sermon. They have introduced considerable variety in the style and form of service. They have studied the wants of the people, and the means which other parties have adopted in order to meet them; and those who least approve of the ends they have been seeking are nevertheless bound to commend not only the zeal and industry with which they have worked, but also the anxiety they have shown to become all things to all men, that so they might by all means gain some. Surely others may profit by their example, and while retaining all that is felt to be essential, cultivate that practical wisdom which seeks to comprehend the circumstances and demands of the age, and to provide for them accordingly. Congregationalists should be the first to emancipate themselves from a bondage to mere traditionalism, and show a true Catholicity by gathering wisdom in every quarter, and profiting by the experience of other Churches for the improvement of their own organization.

Looking more closely at the constitution and practices of Congregationalism as it is, with the view of ascertaining whether any or what changes may be made to meet the objections of those who admit that it has laid hold of certain grand principles of Church polity, but are staggered by present modes of administration, we are necessarily led to consider its conditions of Church fellowship, and the plans adopted for their enforcement. Those who have been so trained in Nonconformist ideas

on Church membership, that they have almost come to regard the details of its arrangements as of Divine appointment, have but very inadequate conceptions of the revulsion of feeling produced in the minds of those who have been educated amid other associations, when they are first brought into contact with the practices that till recently obtained in all our Churches, and which even now are to be found in the majority. To some the idea of an investigation into their private religious experience by comparative strangers, in order that a report of the results may be made to a meeting of the Church, is so distasteful and repellent that they at once turn away from the community which requires it. They shrink with a sensitiveness which it is impossible not to respect from laying bare their most sacred feelings,—those which they would hardly confide even to their most intimate friend,—to visitors with whom they have little or no acquaintance, and whose want of tact in the prosecution of their inquiries, may very possibly furnish little guarantee that their judgment will be formed with wisdom and discrimination. Others object to it on the ground of principle as well as of feeling. They regard the whole proceeding as essentially inquisitorial in its character, and insist that as no man has a right to assume such a position of authority in relation to another, so he in his turn is not justified in sacrificing his Christian liberty by allowing another to assume it to him. They have no objection freely to converse on the subject of their Christian profession with a minister or others, but they demur to its being insisted upon as a necessary condition to Church fellowship. Holding that a profession of Christian faith spontaneously and intelligently made should be accepted as genuine, unless there be distinct evidence to the contrary, they regard Churches who require more than this as usurping a power which

Christ has not committed to them, which has no warrant in the New Testament, and the exercise of which is attended with serious practical evils. They urge, further, that experience has proved that such attempts to maintain the purity of the Church defeat their own purpose, operating as barriers to prevent the entrance of many whose lives would adorn a Christian profession, and yet failing to exclude those against whom they are specially directed. A third class go further still, and deny the propriety of establishing any distinction at all. Advocating the multitudinist theory which consistently enough finds its place in a National Church, they demand that the doors of the Church should be thrown open to all who choose to enter, and that any separation between believers and unbelievers should be left to Him who knoweth the hearts and who alone judgeth righteous judgments.

Can Congregationalism, with a due regard to its own principles, properly make any changes in deference to these views? It bases its polity entirely on the New Testament, and is of necessity bound to maintain every principle which it finds inculcated there. What the first Churches, guided and instructed by inspired Apostles, were, it maintains that the Churches of our own day, in all essential features, ought to be. Admitting that diversity of circumstance affects details in arrangement, it contends that it ought not to interfere with fundamental principles, and that though Church-life must be influenced by the same causes that affect society at large, the constitution of the Church ought to retain in all ages those characteristics which were given by its Founder and those who acted under His immediate guidance. The simple question to be considered, therefore, is whether it is possible for Congregationalism to sacrifice any of its distinctive usages without compromising those Scriptural

principles for which it has always contended, and on which its vitality and strength depend.

To us it is abundantly clear that the first Churches were composed of men who had been taught to trust in Christ as their Saviour, to accept Him as their Teacher, to obey Him as their Lord. Among them there were many and serious differences, but they were all within the limits defined by this general agreement. Their members were professedly men who with their hearts believed unto righteousness, and with their mouths made confession unto salvation. It is not necessary to enter into any elaborate argument to establish this, for the very nature of the case proves that it could not have been otherwise. There was little fear that any would intrude into their company whose faith was nothing more than an indolent acquiescence in general principles. Christianity was not yet respectable, and the ranks of a sect everywhere spoken against would certainly not be increased by a crowd of time-servers, eager to accept the dishonour of a fellowship with which they had no spiritual sympathy. It was by faith only that men would be led to identify themselves with a community whose very name was a term of reproach, one of whose leaders declared that he and his fellows were counted as the scum and off-scouring of all things, and fellowship with whom, instead of conferring any advantage, would expose to certain odium and probably to great danger. Some, possessed by a passionate enthusiasm, kindled by the story of the cross and resurrection, might commit themselves to a profession the cost of which they had not counted, and having run well for a time turn back. The superficial, the excitable, the self-deceived might find place in the Christian Church, but not the formalist or the hypocrite. Such anticipations, derived from our knowledge of human nature, and the circumstances of the case, are amply confirmed by all that

we learn from the New Testament as to the character of these first Churches. They were companies of men whom faith in Christ had stirred up to the pursuit of new and noble ends, for whom a new life had begun in the soul, and was manifesting itself in all their actions, who had received Christ Jesus as their Lord, and were striving to walk in Him.

Such ought Churches to be still. In what manner the line of demarcation between the true servants of Christ and the world is to be drawn, on whom is to rest the responsibility of deciding in the case of individuals to which category they belong, and in what way those on whom it rests may best discharge the duty it imposes, may be questions of great difficulty and importance ; but they do not affect the fact, that even in this professedly Christian country, there are only some who are genuine Christians ; nor do they affect the principle that only true Christians have a right to take their place in the Church. An observance of the outward forms or an obedience to the moral precepts of the Gospel does not make a Christian, still less a mere acquaintance with its doctrines, least of all, the attainment of a certain age which may be laid down as a proper time for assuming the responsibilities and entering on the privileges of Church-fellowship. Christianity has its root in the heart and its fruit in the life, and where these are not, the essential qualifications for membership are wanting. Our circumstances of course differ widely from those of the first Churches, from the fact that all men who think it necessary to their social respectability to maintain a show of religion are now to be found in Christian sanctuaries, whereas in those first days they would have been adherents of idolatry and worshippers at its shrines. But there may be as little real sympathy with the Gospel, as little spiritual union with Christ, as little earnest desire to live godly in

Christ Jesus, and as little fitness therefore for admission to the Church, in these nominal Christians as in professed idolators, and the need for a distinction between the Church and the world is as great as ever. To make that distinction by receiving to its ranks those, and those only, who are true believers, should be the aim of every Christian Church.

It is no objection to this principle that the ideal is too lofty to be reached, and that all the means hitherto employed to realize it have been confessedly inadequate if not mischievous. In the case of individuals, the Scriptural ideal is infinitely beyond anything which man has ever reached, but no one would say that a man is justified in alleging his own shortcomings and those of others as a reason for abandoning all endeavours after that perfect holiness which is held up to him as the object of spiritual ambition. So in the case of Churches, all attempts to make the Church correspond with the Divine ideal may have utterly failed, it may even be that they were sure to fail, and that no possible exercise of wisdom can prevent the occurrence of similar failures in the future. It does not, therefore, follow that we are at liberty to substitute some pattern of our own for that which we have received from Heaven. We might grant all that can possibly be alleged against the plans at present in operation, that the inquiries instituted are often little better than mere pretences, and when they are a reality are frequently misleading, that the result has often been that the Church has welcomed those whom she ought to have rejected, and discouraged those to whom she ought to have extended a helping hand, nay, that she has even rejected those whom Christ had welcomed; but it is a strange conclusion to draw from this, that she ought therefore to renounce the fundamental idea on which she is constituted. Because she finds a difficulty

in determining who are Christians, is she to declare that those who are not, are equally entitled to a place in her fellowship with those who are ?

We do not at all underrate the evil resulting from these practical mistakes, but there may be reform that shall stop short of the destruction of the vital principle of the Church. That may be retained even though the Church should disclaim the responsibility involved in the judgment of the inner life, and should leave each individual to determine for himself in the sight of God, and as having to give account to Him, how far he himself meets the conditions required of those who would be united to the Church of Christ. It might seem almost superfluous to point out the radical differences between those who would thus trust to the quickened action of the individual conscience, rather than to the minuteness of investigations conducted by the Church, for the maintenance of purity of communion, and those who support the multitudinist theory ; but unfortunately the two things are so continually confounded, and wholesale and indiscriminating accusations of indifference to the spirituality of the Church are so often directed against those who believe that the present process does not secure it, that it is necessary to be specially distinct on this point. The present writer holds that it is possible to maintain the necessity of a new spiritual life, and to insist that conversion is a reality, and that those only over whom this change has passed are proper subjects for membership in the Church, and yet to confess that the Church has no gift of discerning the spirits, enabling it to decide in each case whether such a change has been wrought, and that the responsibility must therefore be left with the individual alone.

Congregational principles stand on an entirely different ground from the usages which are based on them. For the former there is ample Scriptural authority—the latter

have at best only the tradition of a denomination, or the evidence of experience, to allege in their favour. The former therefore must be maintained until it can be shown that we have been misled as to the meaning of the New Testament—the latter are open to such modifications as a wider experience may dictate, or as the altered circumstances of the times may appear to demand. Yet there is a style of argumentation which puts them both on the same basis, and quietly assumes that the demonstration of the one carries with it the proof of the other also. It is proved, as it can be proved easily enough, that the true spiritual life in Christ is an essential qualification for membership in Christ's Church, and here it is supposed that the whole necessity of proof ends, that everything else follows as a matter of course, that the visitation and personal examination of each candidate by the minister, and a deputation from the Church, followed by a report on the whole to the assembled community, and the verdict pronounced thereupon by a body who at best can have very scanty materials on which to form a decision, are just as Scriptural. To all this an objector may reasonably demur, and when he comes to demand proof at each stage of the process, those who are engaged in the defence will not be long before they find themselves in sore straits. At the very next stage of the argument,—at the assertion that as every member of a Church should be a Christian, therefore he is bound to satisfy the Church that he is so, and that for this something more is requisite than his mere profession, their difficulties will begin. It is a position which an objector is sure to challenge, and for which it will not be easy to adduce that Scriptural proof on which alone Congregationalism professes to rest. The New Testament warrants the separation of the Church from those who do not live in accordance with the laws of Christ ; and it would justify the refusal

to admit such into the Church. We would go even further, and say that it would warrant the adoption of a more rigid law than that which was applied to men just gathered in from heathenism; but to infer from this that it gives a Church authority to institute tests by which the inner life of men should be proved, and the conformity of their experience with the standard of the Gospel decided, is to press the conclusion further than the premises warrant.

A good deal has been gained when this simple distinction between the essential and accidental parts of the system is made clear; it is at once understood that the abandonment of present modes of administration does not involve any alteration in the fundamental law of Church fellowship; that a proposal for the abolition of all distinction between the Church and the congregation would find as little favour with the numbers who feel the necessity of some change, as with those who adhere most rigidly to the old system; that nothing more is contemplated than an improvement in the mode of working out principles which will be retained in all their integrity. The idea of leaving the responsibility wholly with the individual himself may indeed at first sight seem startling and revolutionary, but a more careful examination may possibly dispel much of the alarm that is felt. It is true that at present the Church apparently assumes a good deal of responsibility in each decision, but it is only in appearance. It is by the candidate himself the Church's opinion must in the majority of cases be shaped; for how can the Church judge of the inner life except by the help of what he communicates. He narrates the story of his awakening to spiritual consciousness, of the hours of secret penitence through which he has passed, of the inward conflicts through which he has fought his way into the kingdom of God, or of those more gentle drawings of the

Spirit of God, by which he has been led to a knowledge of the Saviour, and an enjoyment of that peace which He imparts to the soul. If he should simply be using unctuous phrases which he has borrowed from others, and with which the clever hypocrite never finds any difficulty in making himself acquainted, if beneath the fair exterior and the profession in which it is impossible to detect a flaw, he conceals an unregenerate heart, or if he has been mistaking the working of natural feelings for the presence and influence of the Spirit of God in him, how is the Church to unmask the deception? All that it can do at best is to pronounce a judgment on the supposition that the statements to which it has listened are genuine. It is, therefore after all, the profession of the individual himself which determines whether he is to be accepted or rejected.

It is important that we should remember the limits within which our action in this matter is confined. Conversation with a judicious pastor or friend, such as all desiring to be right would seek, if it is not insisted upon as a condition of communion, may do much to enlighten and help a man. It may be useful in guarding him against crude and hasty views, may stir him up to a more searching self-scrutiny, help to quicken the sensitiveness of conscience, and elevate his entire conception of a Christian profession and its demands. It may teach him to discriminate between mere temporary excitement and true spiritual feeling, or supply encouragement and help where it is needed by those of timid and shrinking spirit; but this kind of moral guidance and support is about all that one man can do for another here. Every man must bear his own burden and act for himself in the decision of the question, the most solemn with which any one can have to deal, whether he is prepared, knowing what Christian discipleship involves, to adopt the name

and assume the responsibilities connected with it, and anything which has the slightest tendency to weaken the sense of his individual responsibility here is an incalculable evil. This most assuredly is the case with the ordinary mode of procedure in Congregational Churches. Great care may be, and generally is, taken to guard against the notion that the Church has pronounced the accepted candidate a Christian. But the fact remains that he has been subjected to such an investigation as it was thought necessary to institute, and that he has so far satisfied those by whom the enquiry has been conducted that he has been welcomed to Christian fellowship. That fact tells with him far more than a thousand cautions. He has passed the ordeal, and it is difficult to make him understand that even those who have instituted it do not regard it as a decisive test. Thus the Church, intentionally or not, appears to assume a most onerous responsibility, and the man has obtained what he accepts as an implied assurance as to his own spiritual state, an assurance that will weigh little with those who are intent on working out their own salvation with fear and trembling, but which will be most greedily welcomed and fondly cherished by those to whom it will be most dangerous. Most pastors of long experience will, I believe, testify that this is no imaginary or unfrequent evil; but I fear that what comes under our observation gives but a very inadequate conception of the injurious influence that is exerted. The positive advantages of a system must be great indeed if they are sufficient to counterbalance the evil of fostering that self-deception to which the soul is only too prone.

But will any one, who has had an extensive acquaintance with the working of the system, venture to say that such advantages have been secured, or that as a whole the results have been satisfactory? It would not be sufficient, in order to justify such statement, to be able to prove

that *as a rule* those who are accepted by the Church are consistent Christians, while those who remain outside show by their lives that they have had no experience of the practical power of the Gospel and that the line which is drawn does, with such exceptions as might fairly be expected, represent with great fairness the distinction between the Church and the world. Even so general a statement is not to be accepted without examination. There are some who would go so far as to pronounce it the very opposite of the truth; but could it be shown to be true, it is really little more than might be said of any system. There are certain marked features of religious character which it is almost impossible to ignore, and that those in whom they appear are ranked accordingly, is nothing very wonderful. There are some who would be welcomed by any Church, there are others who, if they were to seek admission, would be just as certainly rejected by any body which attempted to preserve the purity of its communion. It is by its action on other classes, in the detection of formalism or hypocrisy, or in the attraction of persons whose morbid conscientiousness would keep apart from those with whom they have nevertheless deep spiritual sympathy, that the ordinary usage is to be tried, and it is here that it has signally failed on both sides, in relation to those whom it excludes as well as to those whom it admits.

It is a frequent subject of regret among all ministers that there are so many in their congregations of whose piety they entertain no doubt, who cannot be persuaded to join the fellowship of the Church. It is easy to say that their religion is imperfect, as it has not taught them to subdue the pride which rebels against the requirements made of them; that if their love to Christ were deeper they would be more willing to accept the cross which they are asked to bear for His sake, and that

their reluctance to submit to the ordeal applied by the Church is itself a proof that, whatever excellence they may possess, they are not fitted to enjoy the privileges of Christian fellowship. The charity which thinketh no evil ought to rebuke such harsh judgments, and facts continually prove that they are as fallacious as they are severe. Such reasoning, indeed, assumes all that has to be proved. If Christ has imposed this upon all who would be His faithful disciples, for them there must be an end of all controversy. Natural feeling may chafe against such demands, but if they are made by the Master, those who desire to keep His commandments must cheerfully comply with them. But the ground on which the opposition to them rests is, that they are not made by the Master at all, and that from first to last, they are a human device, and a device inconsistent with the genius of the Gospel and with Christ's mode of treating human souls. He was ever tender, pitiful, mindful of the peculiarities of men's temperaments and circumstances; ready to welcome the faintest germ of penitence and faith, and to aid its development; always encouraging the timid and helping the feeble. It was His glory that He would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax; and how, it is asked, can it be supposed possible that He can look with approval on a system, which meets the soul at the very beginning of its pilgrimage with demands so onerous, that the timid and the sensitive are sure to recoil from them. The advocates of a more generous policy demand, therefore, that these barriers be thrown down, not because they appear formidable to themselves, but because they hold them to be unauthorized, and because they feel that they are calculated to repel those whom Christ, with His tender consideration for the weak and ignorant, would have encouraged and welcomed.

It is not for those who have always maintained the

rights of conscience themselves, to sneer at these scruples in others, and to impute to a want of Christian principle that which is the result rather of a desire to guard the liberty of the individual against the usurpations of the Church. Even if it should be considered that these objects are mistaken, it will scarcely be maintained that their mistake is sufficient to warrant their exclusion from fellowship, and yet that must be the case so long as the existing methods are preserved. They may find a home in other communities, but the doors of Congregationalism are barred against them. There can be little doubt that it does thus continually lose men, whose lives would adorn their profession, and whose intelligence, earnestness and independence would contribute materially to the strength of any society with which they were connected.

Nor do these constitute the only class thus kept outside. Timidity, quite as often as pride, leads men to shrink from the investigation of spiritual life, which our Churches have hitherto thought necessary. It may be said, and said with truth, that the difficulties are greatly exaggerated, that the interview even with a couple of deacons, is not so terrible a thing as the imagination paints it, and that the cases are rare in which there is anything that ought to disturb even the most sensitive or alarm the most timid. But such a plea really involves the most emphatic condemnation of the system. To represent the enquiry as so harmless and unmeaning, is really to abandon the only ground on which it could possibly be defended. If it is to have any value, it ought to be one of the most searching inquiries that can be instituted, conducted by the wisest and gravest men the Church can find, who should take all possible care, in order to arrive at an opinion on which the Church would be justified in acting. Notoriously this is not the case in a great number of instances, but this is

the light in which it presents itself to outsiders ; and therefore it is that many, whose earnest piety is beyond a question, shrink from the application of such a test, especially by those with whom they have little or no acquaintance, and either remain outside the Church, or having made up their minds to dare everything rather than lose the privilege of a Christian communion, prepare for the inquiry with a fear and trembling which, in several cases, I have known to be attended with serious consequences. My own doubts as to the wisdom of the system were awakened years ago by observing the painful effects produced on the physical and mental health of some candidates, for I could not but feel that Christ had never intended to impose suffering of that character on any of His disciples as a condition of their reception into His Church. To tell me that these timid ones are scared by phantoms of their own creation, increases instead of relieves the difficulty. The only plea that could be urged for such a course is its necessity, but if the inquiry instituted be for the most part of a superficial, almost of a formal character, even that fails. As a safeguard for the purity of the Church it is illusive, and yet a grievous burden is laid upon the individual conscience. The fact is, if the inquiries were generally of the nature they ought to be, they would long since have become intolerable. It is only because they are generally made so easy that they have survived, but in making them easy they are made practically worthless.

It is said that the Church cannot concern itself about exceptional cases, that it must provide against the admission of unworthy men, and that if the plans it adopts for this purpose unhappily exclude those whom it would joyfully receive, it is one of those inevitable imperfections that attach to all human systems. The argument is specious, but it leaves out of consideration one of the great ends

which a Church should seek to secure. It is meant to be a gathering of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and it should aim to embrace in its fellowship all who desire that privilege, and who possess this one qualification for enjoying it. It should not be more anxious to be pure than to be complete, and therefore should seek to include all who are Christians, as well as to exclude all who are not. It is not in any sense a private society, partaking of the character of a club, and entitled to lay down conditions which shall give it a selectness beyond that which is required by the law of its constitution. Admission to its communion is not a privilege which it can give or withhold at pleasure, or in relation to which it can lay down arbitrary laws, but a right which every Christian can demand. That Church cannot answer to the true idea of a Church of Christ, which has regulations that exclude from it those whom Christ has received to His fellowship. The principle seems obvious, but it has been and is constantly ignored in practice. Christian societies have continually acted, and do still act, on the assumption that they have rights of legislation as well as administration, that they can exact certain things from their members beyond those which Christ has prescribed in the New Testament, and that they are justified in depriving recusants of the benefits of Church fellowship. But, surely, if the spirituality of a Church is impaired by the introduction to its ranks of those who are not Christians, its catholicity is destroyed on the other hand when its laws interfere with the admission of those who are.

It would be a thankless task to insist upon the utter insufficiency of the system as a guarantee for that purity for the sake of which it is preserved. There are few Churches whose records do not furnish melancholy evidence that a most careful and jealous watchfulness

cannot prevent the intrusion into the Church of men who have neither part nor lot in the great Christian heritage. No doubt these are just such errors of judgment as fallible men were sure to commit, but the question recurs,—Why ask them to form a judgment at all? They are not to be blamed for the natural and necessary mistakes they commit, but for taking upon themselves functions to which they are confessedly unequal, and in the discharge of which they are, as all experience shows, continually falling into error, fraught with most mischievous consequences. My own acquaintance with Congregational Churches enables me to assert with great confidence that the evils which might have been expected to arise in the administration of such a polity are extremely rare, that it is not often that the gates of the Church are opened or closed in obedience to mere personal feeling, and that though many mistakes are made they are for the most part errors of judgment. But while this ought to be remembered in justice to the men, it does nothing to take away the force of the objection to the system. Those who are engaged in carrying it out may be, and in general I believe they are, under the influence of right motives, and are conscientiously anxious to do their duty. But a man may be eminently conscientious and very crotchety, extremely narrow, capricious and wayward in the formation of his opinions, disposed to attach importance to trifles and to underrate some of the clearest evidences of Christian character, and any one of these faults will detract from the value of his judgment. To discharge the duty assigned him with even a moderate degree of efficiency, there must be in his character a combination of qualities seldom met with. He should have great spiritual insight, but, at the same time, a power of holding his judgment in suspense, such as men with clear, intuitive perceptions seldom

possess. He should have a sympathetic temperament so that he may win his way to the hearts of others, and at the same time possess the strength of mind which would preserve him from those too lenient and flattering estimates of character to which such a spirit would incline him. He must have the caution which would save him from being imposed upon by that unctuous talk which is generally found to be in inverse proportion to the depth and reality of spiritual feeling, and yet he must have that hopeful trust which will teach him to recognize, even amid many signs of weakness and imperfection, the presence of a simple faith and a sincere love, as yet, perhaps, only in its beginnings, but on this very account needing to be met with genial confidence. Freedom from prejudice, boundless tact, large and varied experience, power to enter into the special difficulties of others, and considerate tenderness blended with keen discrimination, strictness that shall not degenerate into severity, charity that shall not be blindly credulous, and last, but not least, confidence in his own judgment, associated with that humility which ought to be the great characteristic of a man called to such an office, are qualities indispensable to those who are to guide the Church in its decisions as to those who seek its fellowship. The bare enumeration of them is sufficient to show how few there can be who have even a moderate degree of fitness for the work. Yet, according to present arrangements, each Church ought to contain several. It cannot be thought wonderful that they are not found, that the investigation is often of a most perfunctory kind, that there is nothing like uniformity in the judgments pronounced, that some err as much on the one side from comprehension, as others on that of restriction, and that Churches are continually discredited and distressed, as time and experience show them the mistakes they have committed.

The remedy for these evils some would find in increased stringency of the preliminary investigations. But if the difficulty be, as most will admit, to find men who can conduct them with any approach to success, it is evident that no attempt to make them more severe will meet the case. The tendency of Congregational Churches has been for many years past in the contrary direction, and the changes which have been made have not lowered their character. The demands made upon candidates have been gradually relaxed. First, the oral statement made to the Church was abandoned, or a written one substituted for it, and in most cases even this has been altogether discontinued or made optional. A considerable number of Churches have gone further still, and no longer insist on the visitation by the deacons or other members. There is a growing feeling that the system has not guarded against the evils it was intended to avert, and that it has itself created others of a very serious character ; that it is open to question (to say the least) whether the most free and liberal plan—one on which all who desired to make a public profession of faith in Christ, whose lives are in harmony with their profession, should be accepted—would have introduced a greater number of unworthy members, while it is certain that there is a tendency in the present plan to foster pride and exclusiveness in those who, having been received into the sacred circle themselves, fancy that they are invested thus with a right to pronounce on the fitness of others to join them. It is, perhaps, hardly to be hoped that the Churches will at once, or will even speedily renounce the practices in which they have been educated ; but it will be something if they are led to recognize that these do not form an essential part of Independency, and that those who advocate their disuse are just as zealous for the spirituality of the Church, and just as ready to adopt wise means for securing it, as those

who most earnestly insist on their retention. It is not proposed to tamper with the basis of our Church constitution, namely, that the Church of Christ should consist only of those who are "sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." It is not desired even to abolish the necessity of a distinct act of public profession on the part of each member in that application for fellowship, which in the ordinary course would be received at one meeting and decided at the next ensuing. It is asked only that the Church should regard a profession as genuine, unless the life shows it to be the reverse, and that it should abandon the idea of judging as to the reality of the spiritual life, leaving everyone to feel that the act is solely his own, and that to his own Master he stands or falls. I firmly believe that the purity of the Church would be at least as secure on this plan, as on that at present in vogue, and that the adoption of it would sweep away many of the most serious hindrances to the spread of Congregationalism among the very classes whom it is most desirous to influence. It is unquestionable that the ranks of our Churches are recruited principally from the ranks of the young, that comparatively few candidates for admission are found amongst men of mature years and high culture, and that numbers who have grown up in our congregations, and who have not in early life entered the Church, continue to remain outside, though their lives indicate them to be sincere Christian men. The truth is, they are unwilling to face the ordeal which the Church has instituted. Age, education, every influence which increases the sensitiveness of a man, and indisposes him to unveil his soul to the gaze of others, hold men back who yet painfully feel their position, and would, under another system, gladly enrol themselves among Christian professors. Is it wise or right for us to tell such men that they are too proud, that their shrinking from the test the Church thinks

necessary is a sign of remaining corruption which they ought to put away, that the cost is trifling for a privilege so great? Nothing is more flattering to our own self-complacency than to adopt a tone such as this ;—whether it be Christian, or wise, or edifying thus to sacrifice to our net, and to burn incense to our drag, is a very different question. We are certainly robbing ourselves of much strength, and the only thing that can justify a course which certainly operates as a serious discouragement to many godly souls, is a clear proof that we are obeying the commands of our Master. If such proof be not forthcoming, our procedure is as unchristian as it is suicidal.

The questions we have hitherto considered, important as they are, are subordinate to those which relate to the creed of the Church. However desirous any Church may be to welcome all true Christians to its communion, if there be demanded from them a formal or implied assent to a number of dogmas, there is in such requirement a fatal hindrance to the development of the true Catholic idea. What that idea is, we are to gather from the New Testament and from the practice of the Primitive Churches. The notion that in order to Christian fellowship, there ought to be an agreement of opinion even on the most abstruse points of theology, crept into the Church at an early period, and has been so long dominant, and so deeply rooted, that it is very hard to bring men to understand that it has no place in the New Testament; but that, on the contrary, there were in the Primitive Churches the widest diversities of view even on doctrines which we regard as of cardinal importance, and yet that the Apostles made no attempt to secure that unity which later ages have thought so essential, by insisting upon the expulsion of dissentients. They had a power to which no others could ever pretend—they had the mind of Christ; and, had it been

right or necessary, they could have ended the differences by an authoritative declaration of faith, and an injunction to the Churches to separate themselves from any who refused to submit to it. That there was a limit to their toleration we shall see afterwards, but the creed on which they insisted was very short, simple, and free from that subtlety and minuteness of definition by which later creeds have been marked. The liberty of thought which they permitted allowed of differences of opinion, which most Churches even of our own times would regard as inconsistent with the preservation of unity or orthodoxy.

Looking at the history of the Church in subsequent times, and at its condition, divided into so many different sections to-day ; seeing how little suffices as a basis for sectarian separation ; how the slightest varieties of opinion as to polity, or even as to ritual, have been allowed to break up the external unity of the Church ; how Congregationalists and Presbyterians have often lost sight of their common faith in the fierceness of their disputation relative to Church government ; how Congregationalists have been divided into two separate communities, by difference as to a mere rite—a difference which, under a dispensation of the Spirit, must surely be regarded as of very secondary importance ; how Presbyterians have constituted rival communities on the ground of opposing theories as to the relations of Church and State ; and how those who arrogate to themselves the title of “ Brethren ” are sub-divided into, I fear to say, how many little sects ;—it is strange to come back to the story of the first Churches, and find how their members contrived to preserve their unity, despite diversities at least as serious as those which now divide the Christian commonwealth. The difference between the Jewish and the Gentile party, the men who wanted to enforce Jewish laws on Christian converts, and those who insisted on asserting

the perfect freedom of a dispensation in which there was to be neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, which developed itself at so early a period in the Church at Antioch, was at least as grave as many of those which are now regarded as sufficient to prevent the union of Christians in one Church. Yet the Christians of Antioch did not therefore separate into contending sects. They discussed the question in a prayerful spirit, and feeling their inability to settle it satisfactorily, agreed to ask the counsel of the Apostles and the Church of Jerusalem. The letter from that Church to the Gentile communities embodies the judgment of the Apostles on the subject ; but though its decision was distinct and final, it was not accompanied by any of those anathemas which in after times formed the invariable appendix to the decrees of general councils. Recusants were not deprived of Church privileges ; and though the Epistles contain continued evidence of the presence and mischievous activity of the Judaizers in many of the Churches, we do not hear of any case in which they were made the subjects of Church discipline, or in which the dissensions that they fostered led to disruption.

The Church at Corinth, of whose internal life we know more than perhaps of that of any other of these primitive communities, affords a still more remarkable illustration of this policy of comprehension. A Church in which one party was contending for a rigid adherence to the ritualism of the past, and another pushing philosophical speculation to a perilous extent, in which there were innumerable shades of opinion on the part of the upholders of the opposing dogmas, and in which personal jealousies and sectional strifes were hindering the spread of the Gospel, and separating men into little cliques, affords only too faithful a picture of what we see around us to-day. Yet, even there, there were not separate sects, and the Apostle,

in writing to the Church, seeks to heal the breaches which were being made in its unity, but nowhere counsels the adoption of such measures as must have resulted in formal division. He had to deal with men who were in error even on the first principles of the faith. The reasoning in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle appears to have been directed against some who had even gone so far as to doubt the reality of a future life altogether; and if this be a correct view, it serves to indicate the extent to which speculation had run. Yet he does not suggest that they should be excommunicated, he does not even employ against them the language of bitter denunciation. We have a free and searching criticism of their views; an unsparing exposure of all their errors, and of the consequences they involved; a clear exhibition of their inconsistency, with the facts and principles of the Christian faith; an unanswerable argument to show that the truth which they questioned was the necessary consequence of that which they accepted—the resurrection of the Lord; a solemn expostulation with them as to the peril of the associations they were cultivating; but this is all. Of anathemas and Church censures we hear nothing. The bond of fellowship was unity in Christ, and that bond was to be dissolved only in the case of those who proved that they had not the spirit of Christ. The Apostle, indeed, had his anathema, but it was reserved for a state of heart, not for a form of belief, directed not against a departure from orthodoxy, but against a want of love. He had but one test by which character was to be judged, but one line of demarcation by which men were to be separated. His prayer is, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” His terrible denunciation is, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema; maranatha!”

In laying down this as the test, however, it cannot be

denied that some belief is assumed as lying at the foundation of the love. No man can love Christ who denies that there is a Christ, or that there is anything entitling Him to the homage, the trust, and the devotion of human spirits ; but there may be great sincerity, and even fervour of love, found in connection with remarkable crudeness, and even error in opinion. The heart is not under the control of the creed to the extent to which hard and rigid theologians would represent it. Differences of opinion supposed to be important are often little more than questions about words, and where they seem to be vital, there are often strong spiritual affections that are independent of their influence. To the mere logician all this may be unintelligible. He is able to prove, to his own satisfaction, that certain spiritual feelings cannot be co-existent with particular intellectual opinions, and if the point was one to be settled by mere logic, there is no doubt he would be right. His mistake lies in greatly overrating the extent to which men are under the influence of logic, or preserve a perfect consistency between the dogmas of the intellect and the affections of the heart, and in forgetting that men, who hold most contradictory views relative to Christ, and between whom, therefore, he would assume that true spiritual fellowship is impossible, may yet have their hearts drawn by a common attraction to the Saviour, and find, possibly very much to their own surprise, that they are one in Him.

It may be said by some, that this mode of treating religious differences ministers to that laxity of religious opinion, which is already sufficiently wide-spread, and which is rapidly on the increase ; but I am so far from admitting the truth of the allegation, that I believe the very opposite to be the case. The Church has set up orthodoxy as an idol, and the injustice of the demands made on

its behalf have been so extravagant, and the deeds done under its sanction and for its glory so glaring, that they have provoked indignant opposition, and many, in the violence of their reaction against the bondage to which it has been sought to subject their intellect, are disposed to scoff at all dogmas, and to declare that all creeds are equally true, and equally false. Recoiling from the monstrous conclusions, to which the attempt to confine the Christian world within the limits of a narrow creed, would have led them, they have in many cases asserted principles inconsistent with the maintenance of any faith in the Gospel at all. But this is nothing more than what might have been anticipated, and it is to be met, not by scornful indifference or angry denunciation, still less by unworthy concession, the abandonment of any doctrine we hold to be true, or anything approaching to acquiescence in the idea that in relation to religious truth there can be no certitude. The more excellent way in which the Church needs to be instructed, is that of a wise and comprehensive charity, that charity which would teach us that there may be a simple faith in the Saviour, even where the theory as to the nature of His sacrifice and its relation to the Divine government may, in our judgment and in that of the majority of Christians, be erroneous; that men may have reached the cross, and found shelter and safety under its shadow, though it has been by different paths from those along which we have travelled; that, though it be after the way which the Church has branded as heresy, they may be sincere believers, and therefore, members of the mystical body of Christ. It is possible surely, to maintain the authority of the truth in all its integrity, without insisting on our own infallibility; to respect the convictions of others, without relaxing at all the earnestness with which we hold our own; to seek even to correct what appear to us the errors of

our brethren, without treating them, because of these differences, as heathen men and publicans. What is necessary is not a less definite creed, but a more comprehensive spirit; not a depreciation of sound opinions, but a higher estimate of a Christ-like spirit, as the sign and evidence of Christian discipleship.

The Apostle Paul, indeed, in writing to the Galatians, speaks in terms of emphatic condemnation of those who, in any way, corrupted the purity of the Gospel, or sought to substitute some human device for the Divine truth. "Though we," he says, "or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." But this is not at all in opposition to the principles which we are advocating, and which appear to us to be in harmony with the spirit of the Apostle's whole teaching and ministry. Jealousy for the Gospel is not incompatible with the admission of great diversity of opinion in relation to many points, especially those of a speculative character, in connection with that Gospel. The primary design of St. Paul appears to have been to affirm, probably in answer to some calumnies of his enemies, that the Gospel which he preached was one and unchangeable; that it was the same as that taught by the other Apostles, under whose names, as Dean Alford suggests, the false teachers may have sought to shelter themselves; and that it was so certainly and exclusively the Gospel, that, even were an angel from heaven to preach another, he would be accursed. But this is, surely, not to be construed into an excommunication of those who would not accept some elaborate creed based upon that Gospel. What the Gospel was, is set forth by himself in the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached

unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand ; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. xv. 1-4.) Elsewhere he sets forth, in forms somewhat more dogmatic, the nature of the " ministry of reconciliation " in which he was engaged, and whose message was the Gospel he had to preach : " God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Cor. v. 19-21.) On the truths here asserted, Paul insisted, not because a mere assent of the intellect to them brought the soul into a personal relation to Christ, but because through the apprehension of them the heart was led into that trust in Him, that love to Him, that enjoyment of a new life in Him, by which it was saved. The Church, however, has gone very much beyond the Apostle. It has not been content with setting forth the Gospel he preached, but its own interpretations of it. Each separate truth has been elaborately analyzed and expounded, and men have been required to accept, not only the Scriptural doctrine, but the human modes of explanation. It has not been considered sufficient for men to believe that " Christ died for their sins," but if they were not prepared also to adopt the orthodox theory as to the nature of His substitutionary sacrifice, they have been treated as " enemies of the cross of Christ." Is it not possible to return to

the primitive plan, and to lay the basis of a broad and comprehensive Christian fellowship in unity of spirit, rather than in agreement of creed, and to welcome as brethren all who believe in the Gospel as taught in the New Testament, and in whose spirit and life we find the image and superscription of the Lord?

There is nothing in the principle of Congregationalism to hinder it from accepting a basis as simple and comprehensive as this. It has never bowed before that idol of uniformity which the Church early set up, and in honour of which she has, in many ages, done so many acts unworthy of the name she bears. It is not encumbered by a formal creed to which it requires the subscription of all its teachers, much less has it ever prescribed the acceptance of particular dogmas as a term of communion. It is true that all its Churches have not always been faithful to the true idea of their system, and that in an evil hour, as many deem it, the Congregational Union undertook to prepare a declaration of faith. It would have been wonderful indeed, if Congregationalists had escaped entirely from the influence of an idea which has for years been dominant in the Church, and which is so deeply rooted, that even now the majority deem it an incontrovertible axiom that agreement in doctrinal views is essential to unity of spirit. Still, though the preparation of the declaration might seem to indicate that those who thought it necessary, hardly realized the moral grandeur of the position of a Church which could dispense with a written creed, the terms in which it is expressed prove that they were jealous of their liberty, and were not disposed to compromise principle by the establishment of a creed binding on all members of the Union. Very carefully it is set forth that, "it is not intended that the following statement should be put forth with any authority, or as a standard to which assent is required." "Disallowing," it

continues, "the utility of creeds and articles of religion, as a bond of union, and protesting against subscription to any human formularies as a term of communion, Congregationalists are yet willing to declare, for general information, what is commonly believed among them, reserving to every one the most perfect liberty of conscience." It may be said, with some justice, that for men holding such principles to issue a declaration of faith was a perilous experiment, that if, as it afterwards alleged, Congregational Churches "are far more agreed in their doctrine and practice than any Church which enjoins subscription," it would have been better not to interfere with what had been proved to work so well, and that, despite all such disclaimers, the necessary tendency was for such a document gradually to assume a more formal character, and be invested with an authority which its framers did not desire on its behalf. But whatever force there may be in such criticisms, they do not affect the importance of the principle so strongly stated, and its enunciation as the preamble of a document, which may appear inconsistent with it is the proof that, to use Mr. Matthew Arnold's words, "Puritanism remains honourably consistent with the protests which at the Restoration it made against the call for subscription." Churches holding such views ought certainly to find no difficulty in the adoption of the most Catholic idea of communion.

We shall here, however, be met by the assertion that Congregationalists pride themselves on the unity which exists in the absence of a written creed, that such unity is found in a general acceptance of Calvinism, and that of all systems Calvinism is the most narrow and restricted. We are not prepared to admit the truth of the statement in the bald form in which it is put, and of course, therefore, we cannot accept the inference based upon it. There is a sense in which the majority of Congregationalists hold a

Calvinistic creed, but it is not in such a sense as to justify the conclusion at which those who employ this argument have arrived. There is ambiguity about both terms of the proposition, and it is necessary carefully to define what is meant by a Calvinistic creed, and what is meant by a Church holding it, before it is possible to estimate the force of the argument. Calvinism may be used in its own proper sense as expressive of the scheme of doctrine taught by the great reformer himself, and embodied in the confessions of the Churches which have adhered closely to his principles. Of this the best known representative among ourselves is the Confession of Faith of the Westminster Assembly, in which Mr. Arnold tells us, with that peculiar sweetness, of which we may suppose him to be the master, "What we call the British Philistine stands in his religious capacity, sheer and stark, before us." Even this falls short of some developments of Calvinism, but such as it is I venture to say that it is not the creed of the majority, or of any large proportion of Congregational Dissenters. The "machinery of covenants, conditions, bargains and parties-contractors, such as could have proceeded from no one but the born Anglo-Saxon man of business, British or American," was to some extent accepted by a former generation, but it finds little favour among those who are entitled to be regarded as the exponents of Congregationalist doctrine at present. A modified form of Calvinism, which sought by qualifications or explanations of certain of its more offensive dogmas, to escape some of the perplexities of the system, and to assert in the fullest manner the sovereignty of God, without trenching on the freedom of man's will, has a more numerous body of adherents ; but it is questionable whether, even in this more limited sense, Calvinism can be said to be the creed of Congregationalism. If there are numbers who hold it, there are

many, whose orthodoxy is beyond impeachment, who just as decidedly reject it; and as adherence to it is not in any sense a test, it is misleading to speak of it in terms which give the impression that it is so essential a feature of the system, that Churches which are not Calvinist cannot be regarded as Congregationalist.

But there is another and much wider sense in which the term Calvinism is often used, and which makes it, in fact, identical with Evangelicalism. The Methodist repudiates the doctrine of predestination and those which follow from it, and are regarded by him as the distinctive dogmas of Calvinism; but in the recognition of a new life, wrought in the heart of man by the grace of the Spirit of God, he holds the doctrine which is really the keystone of the system. The differences between Calvinism and Arminianism, indeed, are of very slight moment in the eye of the prominent opponents of Puritan theology. The distinction is thus put by Mr. Matthew Arnold: "The God of Calvinism is a magnified and non-natural man, who decrees at His mere good pleasure some men to salvation and other men to reprobation; the God of Arminianism is a magnified and non-natural man, who foreknows the course of each man's life, and who decrees each of us to salvation or reprobation in accordance with His foreknowledge." Between these two he finds little to choose, though, on the whole, he inclines to Calvinism as logically more coherent, but the "anthropomorphic order of ideas," as he chooses to call it, is common to both. By less exact writers, the term Calvinism is often used, not to denote a system generically distinct from Arminianism, but one whose characteristic features are the same. Salvation by the sacrifice of Christ, justification by faith, regeneration by the Spirit of God, are the leading features of what is thus continually assailed as Calvinism, though in truth

they are only features which it has in common with systems to which it is directly antagonistic. If this be the sense in which it is used, Congregational Churches always have been and still are Calvinist. Evangelical principles are dearer to them even than ecclesiastical independence, and they are as little disposed to abandon the one as the other. They are not worshippers of a mere polity—regardless of the doctrines a Church teaches, provided only its independence be secured. If Calvinism is to be a synonym for Evangelicalism, the great majority of them are prepared to say that while they are Congregationalists they are first Calvinists.

In asserting, however, that, as a rule, Congregational Churches hold an Evangelical * creed, it is by no means to be understood that any number of them insist upon a definite acceptance of its dogmas as a term of communion. These are the principles generally held by their ministers and taught in their pulpits, and, as might be supposed, they are in the main held by those who desire to enter into their fellowship. But among themselves there is not only great variety in the modes of expressing their belief, but an insuperable reluctance to be committed to any particular formula. It would require, in fact, but little extension of the liberty they at present enjoy, for them to comprehend in their communion all who can unite on the broad platform of Christian faith, which we have already indicated. That the tendency of thought among them is in this direction, is evident from a comparison between the declaration of faith and the schedule of doctrine recommended by an influential committee of the Congregational Union to be incorporated in the model trust-deeds of chapels. The doctrines it contains are fewer in number, they are expressed in much more general lan-

* The term "Evangelical" has itself a certain ambiguity, but the context will show that it is not employed in a party sense, and it is better than the term "Calvinist," used in the indefinite, incorrect and misleading sense indicated above.

guage, and the whole spirit of the document indicates an increasing desire to allow as much liberty and variety of opinion, as is compatible with faith in the Gospel as understood and expounded by the Apostles.

It may be asked, why, with these views, we should be found opposing the theory of comprehension at present advocated by an important party within the Church of England. The answer is not difficult to find. In the first place, comprehension to be worth anything at all, should be distinct and avowed, in harmony with the principles on which the Church is constituted, and with the authoritative documents to which its members are bound to submit. Liberty is a precious heritage, but it is bought too dearly when it is secured at the cost of straightforwardness and integrity. A comprehensive Church, resting on the foundation of an Act of Uniformity, is a contradiction in terms; and the attempts to secure liberty under a system which requires subscription to creeds—precise, minute and elaborate—must lead, as in fact they have led, to pitiful subterfuges, paltry evasions and non-natural modes of interpretation, which inflict a wound on the consciences of all concerned, and for which the breadth and freedom that may be obtained are but a poor compensation. It is one thing to alter formulas, it is another and entirely different thing to employ all sorts of expedients, honest or dishonest, for the purpose of escaping their pressure. It is only necessary to study the history of recent controversies in the Anglican Church to perceive the damage which has resulted from this unworthy tampering with the language of its creeds and formularies. There have been loud rejoicings in some quarters because of the issue of the prosecutions against heresy; but a more accurate estimate of the results might have checked these premature congratulations. Disruption has been avoided, a law which seemed to be

very stringent has been shown to have no stringency at all, the definiteness of teaching, which it was supposed that the Act of Uniformity had secured, has been shown to be an illusion, liberty has found a home where she could least have expected it, and the advocates of comprehension are able to point to a Church, whose laws remain the same as when it expelled 2,000 of its clergy, because they would not subscribe to its formularies, as approaching in practice to their ideal of breadth and freedom. At first such great results may appear eminently satisfactory, but to those who are more careful about the righteousness of the means than the desirableness of the end, all this wears a different aspect. They cannot ignore the history of the past, or be indifferent to the definite meaning which formularies, alleged to be so liberal, convey to all but those interested in putting a more lax interpretation upon them. When told that comprehension is the fundamental principle of the Anglican Church, their minds revert to the St. Bartholomew's expulsion of 1662, and they ask themselves how it is that a Church which was intended to include a Pusey, a M'Neile and a Temple, was not able to find room for a Baxter and a Howe; or how formularies, now discovered to be so broad and liberal, were construed by those who prepared them, and those who were primarily affected by them, in so different a sense. They naturally wonder whether language has become less definite, or consciences more elastic, with the lapse of time; and their feelings are not much relieved when they are told by teachers of religious truth that this is hardly a matter of conscience, or at all events that conscience must be guided by law, for that here the legal obligation must be the measure of the moral one. Even among those who would welcome the result, if obtained in a legitimate way, who, indeed, desire a wider liberty still, there are many

who not only feel that morality has lost more than liberty has gained, but also, that the apparent and temporary advantage thus obtained for liberal opinion, has been secured by a sacrifice of real power, that a more manly attitude would have been more becoming in men struggling for high principles, and that though it might have entailed upon them personal loss and sacrifice, it would have contributed more to the ultimate triumph of their cause. It is well enough to say that a National Church ought to be free and broad, but as a matter of fact, the constitution of the Anglican Church has been framed on the very opposite idea, and individuals have no moral right to try how far the courts of law can be induced to relax the obligations they have voluntarily incurred. Those courts, on the other hand, are usurping functions which do not belong to them, becoming makers rather than administrators of law, when they are ready to avail themselves of any plausible pretext for interpreting statutes in another than the natural sense. If the law is wrong let it be altered, for a Church established by law can be anything which the legislature is prepared to make it. If Parliament will not make such change, the stronger the argument against any tampering with a law which is in existence, and which cannot be altered in the only mode recognized by the constitution. The nation may be very foolish and the courts very wise, but to look to the wisdom of the latter to repair the mistakes of the former would be to do as serious an injury to our constitutional rights, as the resort to legal quibbles to cover a disregard of obligations which, however courts of law may treat them, ought to be paramount in *foro conscientiæ*, has done to our public morality. Mr. Henry Sidgwick, while himself strongly sympathizing with rational views, has warned his own friends of the mistake they are committing. "I wish," he says, "as heartily as any broad Church-man can, that it [rationalism] may spread

with the least possible disorganization of existing institutions, the least possible disruption of old sympathies and associations. But if we are too eager to avoid disruption and disorganization, we run some risk of encouraging even worse evils, such as sophistical evasion of clear obligations and disingenuous interpretation of definite formularies, conscious unveracity in the most solemn assertions, or vagueness and looseness of thought so deliberate as to be almost equivalent to unveracity." * With comprehension sought by such means we can have no sympathy. It is desirable that men should be generous and liberal, but it is essential that they should be honest.

The comprehension, therefore, which we would fain see characteristic of Congregationalism, is such only as can be secured without any disloyalty to conscience, or an unworthy use of the necessary imperfections of language to facilitate an avoidance of unwelcome obligation. A great advantage which Congregationalism has in endeavouring to work out such an ideal is, that its ministers are not bound by a subscription, with whose requirements they are brought into collision at the first step they take. In the absence of a written creed—an absence which is designed and not accidental—they are relieved, at all events, from the imputation of dishonesty in their endeavours after freedom. The trust-deeds of their chapels are, in some cases, narrow and strict, but, even where they are most stringent, they only provide that certain doctrines shall be preached, not that they shall be maintained as terms of communion, and in their operation they do not affect any man's ministerial status, but simply his right to occupy a particular pulpit. It is for each man's own conscience to determine whether he can, in consistency with his convictions, fulfil the conditions which the

* Pall Mall Gazette, January 6, 1870.

deed of the chapel in which he ministers imposes upon him, and if he cannot, to make the sacrifice involved in the abandonment of that pulpit. He does not, therefore, cease to be a Congregationalist, nor is he shut out from other Churches, the deeds of which admit of more liberty ; and the only evil which results from the existence of deeds of this character is, that the principles of comprehension, which may be accepted by the Churches generally, cannot be carried out in connection with buildings held upon such trusts. The communities worshipping in them would still be Congregational Churches, though insisting upon a more narrow creed than that adopted by the majority of their brethren. Happily most of the chapels built of late years, are held by deeds conceived in a more liberal spirit, and thus no Church system would have fewer hindrances to the adoption of those comprehensive principles, which are so rapidly growing, than our own.

A second point necessary to true Catholic comprehension is that mutual charity which would teach those who differ to respect and honour each other, and to recognize their common relation to their Lord. To include in the same Church men who are continually assailing each other, even to the extent of each party proclaiming its disbelief in the Christianity of its opponents, is only to create a scandal, and bring reproach upon the name which both profess to honour. The evil of the present state of things in the Anglican Church is not so much that Evangelicals and Ritualists differ, as that their differences are of a character to forbid the possibility of Christian union. Paul was extremely Catholic, but it is impossible to believe that if he had regarded Peter and Barnabas in the same light in which Dr. M'Neile (according to his now notorious letter in the Temple controversy) regards both Dr. Pusey and the Bishop of Exeter, he would have remained in Church fellowship with them. Imagine him

denouncing one of his fellow-apostles in the spirit in which Dr. Temple has been assailed, as an enemy of Christ and His Gospel, as a fautor of infidelity, as a corruptor of the faith of men, as one whose elevation in the Church is itself a deadly blow to its purity and strength, and still greeting him as a friend and brother in Christ Jesus! Paul was comprehensive because he was full of true charity, and where charity is not, Church fellowship is nothing more than a mockery or a farce. If men cannot unite in a Church as Christian brethren, without attempt to compromise or suppress their differences, on the basis of mutual respect, each doing honour to the sincerity and conscientiousness of the other, and all striving to cultivate that communion of saints which is independent of these diversities of opinion, they had better not unite at all. The outward show of unity that barely masks the bitterness of the sectarian feelings that lie underneath, can do no good to those by whom it is maintained, and is sure to provoke the contemptuous comment of the world outside.

Once more, it is necessary that the limits to which the comprehension is meant to extend should be properly defined. It is clear that a Christian Church ought not to include, cannot include without the abandonment of its own idea and work, every shade of religious opinion. If it was a company of men, the one object of whose association was to engage in the worship of God, it could not include one who should deny that there is a God to be worshipped. So, as it is to consist of men trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, worshipping Him as God, professing love to Him and seeking to live to His glory, it can welcome those only whose belief is compatible with such sentiments and professions. It would be absurd to say that a Jew, who believes that Christ was a false prophet who deceived the people, or a Mohammedan,

who places Him in a position of inferiority to his own prophet, or some ingenious critic, who is prepared to prove that the life-story of Jesus is a mere deposit of popular mythology and that there never was a Christ, should have a place in a society which exists only for the purpose of glorifying Christ and teaching others to glorify Him also. These are extreme cases, but they are sufficient to show that there is need of discrimination, that there are opinions which necessarily prevent a man's entrance into a Church of Christ, and that in every scheme of comprehension it is proper to recognize the fact. Congregationalists are not likely to seek credit for a liberality they do not possess, by any apparent indifference to the truths always most surely believed among them, and while desirous to open their Churches to all who really love the Lord Jesus Christ, they have no idea in doing this of inviting to their fellowship persons whose creed compels them to regard their most sacred services as nothing better, if they are not very much worse, than unmeaning forms. Between men governed by principles so diametrically opposite there can be no unity. It is not that they differ in opinion only, but that they have no spiritual sympathy, and as true fellowship between them is impossible, there can be no advantage from attempting to maintain its semblance. Still, the articles of belief, which must lie at the foundation of Christian life, are few and simple, and there is no need that they should be formulated in a creed or explained in minute definitions, every word of which suggests difficulty and invites discussion.

It is in a return from the complex creeds with which Christian Churches have encumbered themselves, to the simplicity that is in Christ, that the secret of true unity is to be found. It is not to be expected that diversities will ever cease, it is hardly to be desired that the magnificent

dreams of some as to the union of all Christendom in one grand Catholic confederation should be realized. But it is permitted us to anticipate the cessation of sectarian strife, and to look forward hopefully and longingly to the day when Christian Churches, though still retaining their separate organizations, shall dwell together as brethren, each preserving its own individuality, but all working in hearty sympathy. If Congregationalism shall help on such a consummation, if to the good it has already done by its consistent protests against enforced uniformity, it shall in the future add a still nobler service to the Church by preparing the way for this practical manifestation of true spiritual unity, it will have fulfilled a high mission indeed.

There is another class of questions of infinite importance to the future of Congregationalism, on which it is only possible briefly to touch. It is essential to the efficiency of any Church system that it should unite a due regard to law and order, with a jealous care for individual liberty. There are many systems which have become weak through an undue anxiety about the former. It is the common reproach against Congregationalism, that it has looked too much to the latter, and has suffered the rights of the individual to override the general interests of the community; that, in its love of liberty, it has been careless about the maintenance of law; and that, in its dread of despotism, it has tolerated a disorder which has trenched very closely upon anarchy. These charges have been greatly exaggerated, exceptional cases have been quoted as though they were fair illustrations of its ordinary working, and justice has not been done to the remarkable way in which Churches, enjoying perfect freedom, and governed by no statute book, except the New Testament, have been able, to so large an extent, to preserve peace, unity, and good order. In the ecclesias-

tical, as in the civil world, the lovers of Cesarism delight to magnify the faults and excesses of liberty, but in the one, as in the other, the blessings which liberty brings are not to be lightly bartered away because of the inconvenience which may sometimes be attendant on its exercise. At the same time, it is wise to consider whether it is not possible to remove, or at all events, greatly to mitigate the evils which have been complained of, and thus to secure the increased efficiency of the system itself.

There are no questions on which these opposite tendencies are more apparent, or in which there is more necessity for wise action on the part of the Churches, than those relating to our ministry. There are some to whom order is everything. They are afraid of the eccentricities to which an unfettered liberty of prophesying might lead; afraid that the Gospel may be injured, and the work of God hindered, by the unwise words and deeds of men deficient in culture and taste; afraid that men of taste may be repelled by certain modes of exhibiting truth; they are anxious about the rights of their order, or the dignity of the pulpit, or the peace and concord of the Church. The tendency of all this is to restrict the work of the Spirit of God; to chill zeal, which is earnest and sincere, though possibly it may sometimes be unwise; to allow a spirit of routine to cramp and fetter the action of men possessed with a passion for saving souls; to lose power that might be employed with immense advantage; and what perhaps is the most perilous of all, to make a man's place in a certain order, rather than his possession of spiritual qualifications, the test of his fitness for the work of the ministry. God continually marks His disapproval of this, by the unquestionable success with which He crowns labours on which these slaves of form and order would throw discredit, and which, if it were in their power, they would altogether forbid.

But there is an extreme of an opposite character, against which, in these days, it is even more necessary to guard. There are some who, in their eagerness to resist priestly encroachments, deny that there should be a ministry at all, or if they are not prepared to go to this point, maintain that all who feel themselves drawn to this sacred office, have a right to assume its functions. On intellectual qualifications, on special training for the work, or any title to undertake it except that which is derived from the stirring of earnest desire in the heart, they pour utter contempt, designating those who attach any importance to such credentials as men-made ministers, and arrogating to themselves the high distinction of being God's ministers. The difficulty is, how to deal with such claims, without lending countenance to ideas on which priestism has built up its monstrous pretensions.

It is manifest, however, that the Primitive Churches managed to solve this problem. They gave free scope to those who, out of the fulness of their hearts, preached the Gospel, and yet they set apart men for special service, and had ministers to whom they gave due honour for their work's sake. Thus we find that the Church at Antioch, the mother Church of the Gentile world, was founded by what some in our days would call the unauthorized labours of unordained men. The men who first preached the Gospel to Gentiles in Antioch, did it not in virtue of any commission given them by the Apostles. Though they were founders of a Church, and that Church second in importance only to that of Jerusalem, they were purely voluntary workers. They had learned to love the Lord Jesus, and in the earnestness of their zeal, they preached Him wherever they went, and among other results they collected a band of Gentile converts at Antioch. There could scarcely be a stronger proof of the great change which had passed on the minds of the

Apostles, as the result of the enlightening and enlarging influences of the day of Pentecost and subsequent events, than is furnished by the fact that, instead of being shocked by such an interference with all their cherished notions, they sent down Barnabas, who, when he came and saw the grace of God, was glad. Here then was freedom, but there is sufficient evidence that the Church at Antioch was not, on the other hand, regardless of order. It did not argue that because these spontaneous efforts had been so successful there was no need for a regular ministry. On the contrary, we find that here from the beginning, there was a band of prophets and teachers, and that from this very Church went forth two men specially commissioned to preach the Word unto the Gentiles.

The Epistles are equally clear as to the existence of a ministry in all the Churches, and the Apostle lays it down as a principle which there was no virtue in concealing, and no shame in avowing, that God has ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel. When that ministry aspires to become a priesthood, it forgets its true functions; when it seeks selfish, not Christian ends, it ceases to be a ministry of the Gospel in everything but name; when it insists that to it belongs a monopoly of teaching, it interferes with the inspirations of God's Spirit, and takes away from the Church great power. But it is not necessary, in order to guard against such abuses, to make light of a Divine institution which both common sense and experience show to be essential to the well-being of the Church, and the diffusion of Christianity in the world.

There is little fear in our days, that among Congregationalists at least, undue restraint will be exercised. The tendency is in the opposite direction, and the doubt is whether it may not carry us too far. It is right to insist

on individual rights, but those rights are to be exercised for the general good, and, to some extent, in deference to the general judgment. There are cases in which a man, feeling that he has a work to do for God, a message to deliver, may feel bound to deliver it even in opposition to the voice of Christian brethren. The Church may have wandered from the truth, and dislike one who sets it forth ; it may be wedded to form and routine, and oppose all that savours of daring and novelty ; it may shut its eyes to the changed circumstances of the age, and refuse to adopt the means necessary for dealing with them ; it may enact laws that infringe upon the rights of its members, and in attempting to carry them out, may hold back one whom God has sent, and forbid the delivery of a message which He has given. In all these cases a man must set the voice of his individual conscience against the authority of the Church ; but if he be wise he will pause before he accepts the grave responsibility involved in the adoption of such a course. And where no question of the sort arises, where the point at issue is only as to the personal qualifications, surely it is right to expect that some deference will be shown to the judgment of the Church. It cannot be seriously maintained, that the ministerial office should be assumed by every man who supposes himself called to its exercise. If there be a Divine call, there must be some evidences of it, and of those evidences who can be so fit to judge as the Christian brethren with whom the subject of it is associated ? Or if there be cases in which it is supposed that personal feeling may exercise an adverse influence, that a prophet cannot be expected to receive proper honour in his own circle and among his own companions, it would not be difficult to have some body, who could not be suspected of being thus unfairly prejudiced, to whom appeal could be made.

The old idea of Congregationalism was, that the

Churches should call forth the men who were to be their ministers, and I believe it to be as sound in policy as it is Scriptural in principle. At present it is the reproach of our ministry that its doors are too wide, and that in it are to be found so many men who would find it difficult to vindicate their right to be there, except on that lawless conception of liberty, which assumes that it is the prerogative of every man to do that which seemeth right in his own eyes. A man who has come, no one knows from whence, who has possibly been connected with some other section of the Church, and who, for some reason best known to himself, has chosen to separate from it, but who brings from it no letter of commendation; or who, having been successful as a schoolmaster, or a city missionary, for which office he was well qualified, aspires to the office of the ministry, for which he is altogether unqualified; or a man who has been encouraged by the success of a few occasional sermons, to believe that he has the power to minister to a Church, and has abandoned the uncongenial or perhaps unsuccessful pursuits of business, to undertake this noble work, is able to secure the suffrages of some congregation, and then finds some ministers, who, without even instituting any enquiry, either as to his antecedents or qualifications, ordain him to the pastoral office. This is one of the weak parts of our system, and the difficulty in the way of applying a remedy is great, owing partly to the dread of all external authority, and still more to the proper reluctance to lend any countenance to the idea of a ministerial order.

It is essential, however, to the right working of the system, that in some way a change should be effected. The present state of things has no parallel in any other religious community that recognizes the validity of a ministry, and there is no reason why it should continue among us. It lowers us in the eyes of other Churches,

and it continually impedes our own action. The great hindrance, for example, to the establishment of a Sustentation Fund, which would improve the position, and encourage the hearts of a large number of devoted and useful men, and roll away one of the gravest reproaches on the voluntary system, is the difficulty of defining who are Congregational ministers. There cannot surely be any necessity for the perpetuation of this state of disorder. It requires, in fact, only the creation of a strong opinion among the Churches to put an end to evils which the most thoughtful men among them earnestly deplore, and, if the subject was properly understood, the difficulties, many of which are imaginary, would disappear.

It is not desired to create a close ministerial order, whose members should lay down the conditions on which admission into its ranks might be obtained, nor is it maintained that all candidates for the ministry should have had an academic training, or that those by whom this training has been enjoyed should, in virtue of it, have a position superior to that of their less fortunate brethren. It is not forgotten that diversities of teaching are required for the different orders of mind with which our ministers have to deal, and that a kind of culture desirable for one class may be worse than wasted upon another. It is not denied that God does sometimes raise up men whose great natural gifts enable them to overcome the disadvantages arising from the want of education, while on the other hand no education can ever compensate for the lack of that power which gives freshness, point, and force, in the preaching of the Gospel. But it is maintained that such cases of exceptional endowment are extremely rare, and cannot fairly be quoted as arguments in favour of dispensing with that intellectual discipline, which in the great majority of cases must be necessary for the discharge of the duties devolving upon one, who

has from week to week to preach on the same themes to the same hearers. God forbid that we should attempt to derogate from the honour due to any whom the great Head of the Church has evidently qualified for His ministry, because of their want of scholarship. What we object to, is the attempt to treat the exceptions as though they were the rule ; to argue from the success of a few unlearned men, that culture is as often a hindrance as a help in the work of the ministry. In an age when education is so rapidly extending, when there is a sharpening of intellect, by means of the cheap press, which begets a peculiar keenness of perception, and when so much power is brought to bear in opposition to the Gospel, it is melancholy enough to hear men, who ought to know better, express themselves as somewhat doubtful whether our plan of ministerial education is not a great mistake, and whether possibly a more efficient body of preachers might not be found in rough, rude men, taken from the smithy, or the plough, and sent at once into the pulpit without any preliminary training.

Where the effect of education is to rob faith of its simplicity and love of its fervour, to substitute a cold and freezing propriety for the passion of a burning zeal, to make sermons polished essays instead of glowing appeals to the heart and conscience, it subtracts from that true power which every minister of Christ should aim to possess. This is the abuse, not the use, of culture. There are, however, innumerable examples to prove that the most ardent devotion may be found in association with the highest scholastic attainments, and that men thus thoroughly equipped for their work may reasonably be expected to attain to the highest degree of efficiency. It is far from being so certain, as it is often assumed, that unlettered men are best adapted to meet the wants even of the classes for whom they

are supposed to be specially suited. Even working men will not be slow to detect their deficiencies, and to resent the idea that they are to be won by arguments which have no logical weight, and by appeals which by constant repetition have lost the freshness and force which they may once have possessed. Working men may not care for mere refinement, but they demand power; and power in the exhibition of the truth can be secured in most cases only by careful thought and study. A sensation may be produced, a crowd gathered, and a certain amount of immediate success realized, by men who have no ability to sustain the duties of a regular ministry; and it would be a great mistake to ignore the service which they can render. But surely it would be a still greater error to place them in positions where their weakness would soon become painfully apparent, and the greatest blunder of all to suppose that the work of the Christian ministry can be best done by men of this order.

It is impossible here to discuss or even to suggest the plans by which the difficulties belonging to this subject may most effectually be dealt with. Suffice it to say that the Congregational Churches have during the last few years shown that they are not so helpless in such matters of organization and arrangement as their opponents have been in the habit of representing. The County Associations indicate a power of united action which may with great advantage be more fully developed, and which, if wisely employed, may remove many of the evils which at present exist. Elaborate schemes of organization are not likely to find favour; but there may be a closer intercommunion among the Churches without any infringement of their individual liberty, or any appearance of that approach to Presbyterianism which has too often operated as a bugbear to prevent the adoption of plans which would have saved our system from the reproaches.

which it has often incurred, and secured for it a larger measure of success.

Congregationalism has a noble future before it, if it is able to shake itself free from the influence of conventionalism, to show in its practice more of that elasticity which it prides itself on possessing, to use wisely that liberty for which it has so gallantly struggled, and to develop the power of that Christian willinghood on which it has always insisted as the basis on which the support of all religious institutions must rest. Vapouring talk about principles will profit nothing in the absence of practical evidence of their life-giving influence. Self-sacrificing zeal, wise understanding of the signs of the times, promptitude and diligence in meeting the demands of the age, boldness and decision in carrying on the conflict against error and sin, are the essential qualifications for progress. We cannot live upon the traditions of the past, in an age when the claims of every system are scrutinized, and when those organizations only will endure which show that they have a work to do, and that they know how to do it. Never were there grander opportunities. May He who has placed us in the midst of them give us His spirit—the spirit of wisdom, of love, and of power—to teach us how to improve them for His own glory, and the salvation of that world for which the Lord shed His precious blood.

MODERN MISSIONS

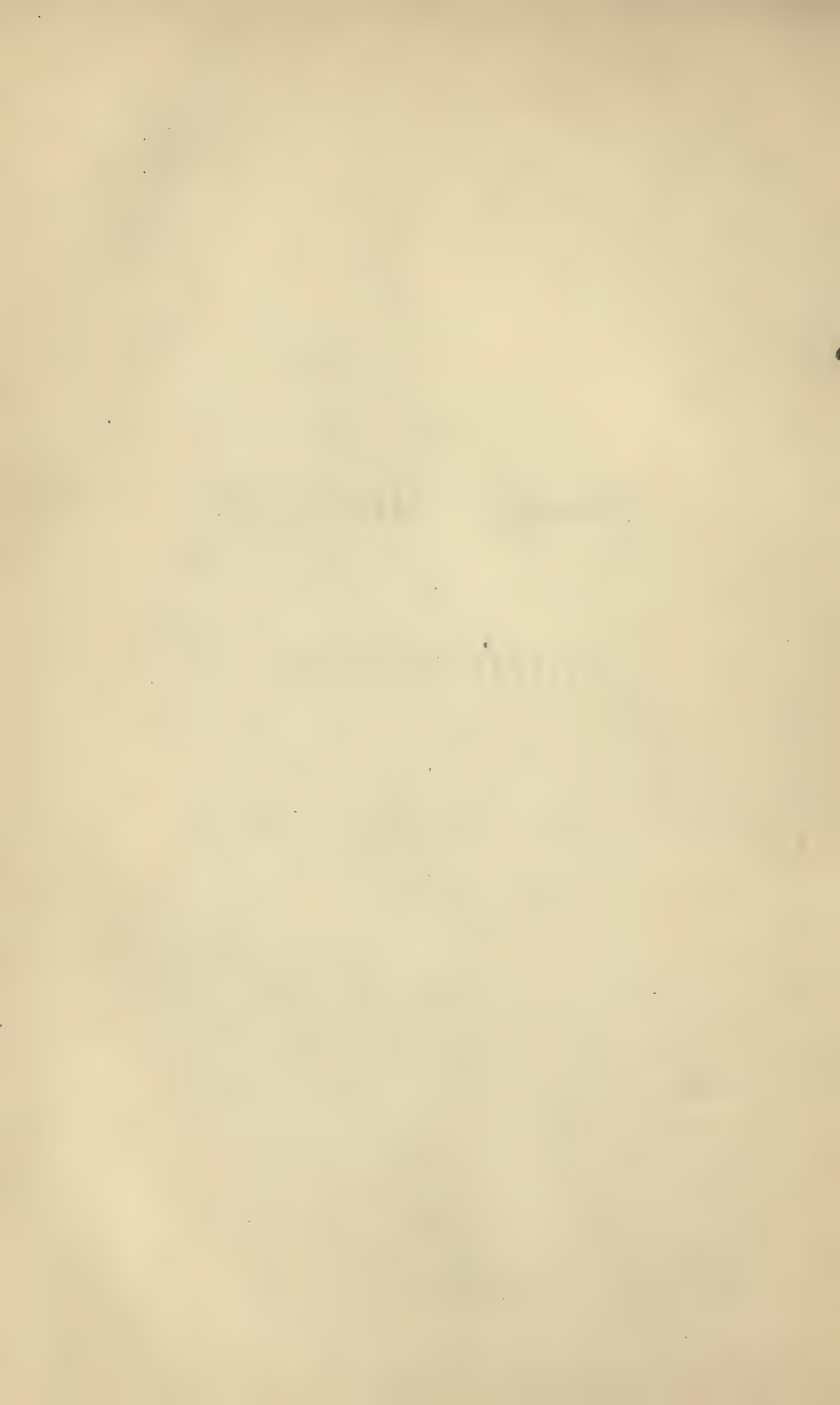
AND

THEIR RESULTS.

BY

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MODERN MISSIONS

AND

THEIR RESULTS.

AN aggressive zeal has always been a prominent feature of a prosperous Church, and every great period of spiritual revival develops that zeal in its most intense form. In the Church of the Apostles, the longing to save others carried men far and lasted long. In the earnest Celtic Church of Ancient Britain, it gave rise to the marvellous efforts of Columba and the Culdees. The unselfish consecration of Boniface and his companions brightened the heathen centuries in the Saxon forests. The Reformers in every land were true missionaries of the Gospel. The fervent piety of New England yearned and toiled for the salvation of the Indian tribes. With their new life, Moravia and Germany sent missionaries to the Eskimo and to Tranquebar. What wonder that the modern Church, secure in the enjoyment of civil liberty, and awaking to the greatness of its opportunities, should follow, with a burst of gladness, the same track of love and light and power. These missions of the Christian Church to "them that are out of the way" are a simple fulfilment of a Divine command. Yet are they

her glory. They appeal to all that is noble in our nature ; they furnish the most stimulating examples of unselfish benevolence ; they are a standing protest against all attempts to secularize human life ; from them has sprung much of the new life, which has quickened so many nations in modern days.

Nevertheless, these modern missions have never wanted formidable adversaries in various classes of English society. The men who conduct them have been held up to ridicule, and the usefulness of their labours has been boldly denied. At one time their opponent is Sydney Smith, who laughs at the Journals of " Brother Carey," and resents his unauthorized intrusion into the sacred land of Hinduism. At another, it is some old Indian, who is a great authority, doubts the reports of missionaries, and pronounces their efforts fruitless. Now it is a writer on Civilization, then some free-thinking *Review* ; now an essayist at the British Association, then some leading newspaper ; now some earnest member of the Anthropological Society, then a witness before a committee of the House of Commons ; or finally, some Colonial Governor, irritated at their opposition to his ecclesiastical schemes, denounces missionaries as disturbers of the public peace, and the great hindrance to (what he calls) real progress. The attack on the missions in China, made last April by the Duke of Somerset, gave occasion to an outburst of prejudice and passion against missionaries in general on the part of the literary classes in England, which it was painful to witness. Their education and their social position, were spoken of with contempt ; their high principle, their benevolent aims, were wholly lost sight of.

Much of this opposition is natural, and to be expected. The " offence of the cross " continues to be real. It can be no pleasure to any class of men to see that faith vigorous and powerful, which is the most determined antagonist of

their own system. The labours and successes of missionaries ride roughshod over many a theory, and sweep away many a sham. Theories of the "true Church," systems of doctrine, theories of civilization, reformation and progress, theories of morals, theories about races, theories of natural and inflexible law, are all affected more or less by the work, the purpose, and the results of Christian missions.

But missionary schemes stand on a common ground with all other reforms, and can claim the same fair field of battle. Scientific Societies are established without hindrance for the advocacy of new views, and the registration of new conclusions in important branches of human knowledge and of social progress. Why must the Christian Church alone be placed under a ban when she is making efforts to improve the world, and is adding to her own experience? In this aspect of the case, a mere social one, we say, with Sir William Hamilton, that "Missions are a necessity." Thought must grow. Truth must fight with error. Purity and principle must contend with the world's wickedness. Religious men have adopted the settled resolve, that the worshippers of material comfort, who "spend their money for that which is not bread," the missionaries of cotton and silk, of opium and indigo and tea, shall not have it all their own way. They have resolved that questions of humanity, of piety, of social and public morals, shall be pressed on the attention of mankind, as well as the distribution of wealth, the increase of trade, and the supply of food. "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." "Man doth not live by bread alone."

Can any just man wish it otherwise? Shall a high morality be confined to Christian countries? Shall barbarous nations be left to bear unaided their terrible burden of degradation and sorrow? Do the literary classes of England wish Africa to return to the slave

system, from which Christian benevolence has largely redeemed its unhappy people? Do they wish that the masses of Chinese, now flowing like great waves over civilized lands, shall be left to their earthly views and earthly life, and go down untaught into that dark future on which the teaching of their great sage throws no light? Shall Kali and Durga be the models of women in India, and our fellow-subjects there know nothing of "the Gospel of the grace of God"?

The special problem involved in the controversy which has been forced upon us is one of the highest order. Like other religions, Christianity enjoins upon its followers certain public, social and individual virtues; but it excels other religions in the character of those virtues, and in the completeness of the system of which they are component parts. What then (to use the happy term employed by Professor Sharp) are the "dynamics" of Christianity? Within and behind the doctrine, the example, the warning, which cluster round its beautiful theory of what is right and good, are there powers which can enable a man to do that right and to attain that good? Can these forces, acting on many men, enlighten society, elevate all the aims of human life, and change for the better the entire moral history of the nation that feels their influence?

We say they can. The most recent writer on European morals, Mr. Lecky, has portrayed in vivid colours the mighty influence which Christianity exerted on the Roman Empire, and the grandeur of the results which it produced within the first eight hundred years of its history. Modern missionary Societies aver that the peculiar truth embodied in the Scriptures is as mighty now; and they offer evidence that, both in individuals and nations, it is producing the same results in the present day. Not only so, but looking to the present and the past, Christian

men assert with confidence that the faith, self-sacrifice, and zeal, which those forces reproduce as freshly now as when the Apostles preached, are sufficient to transform and to elevate the world.

In taking a brief review of modern missions, we may look at the workmen, their doings, and their success.

If many of the earliest missionaries of this century were men of simple training, others were educated men, and a few were scholars, whose attainments and literary labours none but the prejudiced will despise. With the lapse of time, a very large proportion of missionaries from all countries have been fair scholars, and many have carried even into barbarous countries the honourable distinction won in a University career.

There is no sphere of activity which furnishes fuller scope for the highest attainments and the noblest powers, than the great opportunities of missionary life. Nevertheless, much as the friends of missions value good sense and sound knowledge, they hold religious character to be more precious and more useful still. It is here that, as a class, missionaries have been pre-eminently distinguished from other men who have proceeded abroad on professional service. Whatever their attainments, they have been picked men in regard to character. Their personal piety, their devoutness, their purity of life, their kindness and benevolence, have been conspicuous; have been repeatedly acknowledged by their countrymen, and have been the wonder of the heathen. When Hyder Ali, annoyed by the treatment which he had received from the Madras Government, was asked by them to receive an envoy, he replied, "Send me the missionary Schwarz; he is a good man, and I can trust him."

The roll of modern missionaries contains many noble names already held in honour, the lustre of which will increase as the years roll by, and the effect

of their labours on the races they have evangelized, is more clearly perceived. But for them, where would such reforms be? In many a land they have been not only the first preachers of the Gospel of peace, the first who taught the ignorant to pray to a Father in heaven, the earliest teachers of sound morality, but also pioneers in true civilization, able instructors in mechanical arts, and healers of the sick. They have offered no mean contribution to our knowledge of languages and to literature; they have helped to found Universities and systems of education; they have fought hard battles with oppression and wrong. They have given to the world a hundred translations of the Word of God; many languages they have written for the first time; for some people they have framed their first codes of public law. Beholding their usefulness, and knowing their worth, the Christian Church will uphold its messengers of mercy as true benefactors of the world, and will glorify God on their behalf.

The course which missionary enterprise has followed in modern days, and the extent to which it is now carried out, must be but briefly alluded to. Though beginning its work in European colonies, the Church from the first turned with a longing eye to heathen nations. Stirred by the marvellous story of Brainerd and his Indians; by the conversion of the uncouth Eskimo; and by the terrible descriptions of human degradation recorded in the pages of Cook and Vancouver; the hearts of many Christian people were lifted up to God, with earnest desire to help a world so wretched, in which grace could work such marvels. Doddridge felt the condition of the heathen deeply, and pleaded fervently on their behalf. When, therefore, Carey's stirring sermon at Kettering crystallized into definite action the desire of his Baptist brethren; and when the enthusiastic meetings at which

the London Missionary Society was founded, once set the South Sea Mission on foot, the scheme expanded with rapidity, and spheres of labour were occupied in strength. The pent-up zeal of the Church was great; the liberality was large-hearted; and the work was undertaken with singular satisfaction. Within twenty years all the principal Churches of England and America had formed their Societies, had chosen their field, and were employing four hundred and fifty missionaries in actual work.

The fifty years which have since passed away have only consolidated and extended these efforts. At home, arrangements of business and associations for gathering funds, have long been thoroughly systematized. Abroad, the various fields have been carefully divided;—their most accessible points have been occupied; agencies have been originated, which are specially adapted to places and people; and the principles by which details shall be guided have been more clearly defined. There is a fulness, a definiteness, a system about the work in all these missions, and there is a cordial union among the workers, of which opponents are little aware. There is a settled determination to work and to win, which is worthy of the lofty purpose they have in view: while in defence of their converts and of their work, the Christian Churches at home will stand firm as the solid reefs of Polynesia, when they fling back great ocean waves in showers of beautiful but useless spray.

The extent to which their labours have spread, and the degree in which their chosen fields have been occupied, we shall indirectly show in speaking of their success. Suffice it to say, that while Protestant Churches are the mainspring of enlightenment and progress within the bounds of Christendom, beyond those bounds there is scarcely a kingdom or empire of importance in

which their influence is not deeply felt. A hundred missionaries, chiefly from America, are labouring among the Copts of Egypt, the Jews of Palestine, the Armenians of the Turkish Empire, and the Nestorians of Persia. A hundred more from all countries occupy the Ports of China and Siam. Five hundred and sixty labour in the provinces of India and the Island of Ceylon. In Madagascar and South Africa there are nearly three hundred. A hundred and thirty occupy the slave countries around the Gulf of Guinea; and two hundred and twenty work for the kindred people in the West Indies. The Indian tribes of North America have a hundred and five missionaries. Two hundred more instruct the tribes of Polynesia. Nevertheless, compared with the attention which they compel, and the power which they exercise, these missions occupy a trifling space in the world. Their chief actors are a handful of men; their operations are limited; their friends are few. Their agencies may be briefly summarized in the following table :—

Countries.	Societies for Foreign Missions	European and American Missionaries.	Annual Expenditure.
Great Britain	21	970	£558,629
Continent of Europe	13	425	114,755
America	8	542	306,142
Jewish Missions	8	96	53,398
Total	50	2,033	£1,032,934

We must not forget the circumstances under which their work was begun. At the beginning of the century the difficulties which lay in their way were enormous. Throughout Popish Europe the circulation of the Scriptures was forbidden. In the West Indies they could not preach to the slaves. Till 1812, jealous officials watched

for their landing in India. China excluded all foreign influences till 1842. Before the Crimean war a Mohammedan in Turkey, on professing Christianity, was liable to be put to death. They were compelled to turn to barbarous countries, sunk to the lowest depths of degradation and vice. Wherever they went, they found it as difficult to travel, as did Burckhardt or the Landors. They had to study new languages ; to form their own grammars, dictionaries, and vocabularies ; to erect all their buildings. Only after years of labour did they secure competent native assistants.

Even when these obstacles were surmounted, the prime difficulty still remained,—the sinful hearts and lives of the people whom they sought to evangelize. These are the only real hindrance to progress, and their influence extends very far. The communities to which missionaries have gone are involved in errors, not merely as individuals, but as nations. All the elements of their national life are saturated with heathenism. In India, for instance, everything takes a Hindu aspect. Caste regulates companionship, food, and marriage ; it interferes with the claims of humanity in the treatment of the sick. The Hindu religion regulates the cutting of the hair, the cleaning of the teeth, the position in which a man should sleep. It places its idols in the shops ; it supplies the oaths of common talk ; it saturates the words of the language, and gives a Hindu aspect to all ideas. The words *God, sin, salvation, atonement, the other world*, have very different meanings to a Hindu and to an Englishman. All these things have to be Christianized ;—art, taste, language, habits. Old things must pass away, and all things must become new. And only when the teaching of the missionary has reached the soul ; when the Gospel has moulded public opinion and public law, does his work of mercy accomplish its ultimate end.

With a work so vast and so noble before us, we might with justice urge the question of time, before our critics press so hardly the question of success. All the great processes of nature, the mightiest works of art, the triumphs of engineering skill, require years for their completion. Slower far are the processes by which vital changes are wrought in religious belief and in national habits. Not in a single generation, but in many, did Christianity revolutionize the opinions and reform the vices of the Roman Empire. Centuries passed before its lessons secured a place in the settled opinions of the world.

How can it be otherwise, when principles are not truly learned by a people till they are embodied in national acts, in public laws, in the habits of social life ; till they enter into their dealings with other nations, are moulded into the arts, and find a settled place in their literature. The work of the Gospel is never complete in any land till this is done ; and a rare case would it be, if it were accomplished anywhere in the brief period of seventy years. On behalf of modern missions, therefore, we put in a claim for time. Nevertheless, brief as the period of their toil has been, we are not ashamed of the work they have been doing,—of the ground which they have occupied ; of the blessing God has given ; or of the results which they have achieved.

I. Evidence of solid success is found in the fact that the Gospel has won real converts in large numbers. From the outset of our work, in all modern missions, these converts in due time began to be gathered. In some countries they came early. In others, barbarism and degradation, the difficulties of the language, conservative social customs, caused long delay. But everywhere they have come, and, as of old, the Gospel has proved “the power of God unto salvation.” Success, once assured, has in

general steadily increased. Tens have become hundreds; hundreds have grown to thousands. Separate families have developed into communities. In continents whole villages have become Christians. In the seas whole islands have been evangelized.

Naturally, this particular form of success has usually been in inverse ratio to the obstacles encountered. In lands where the providence of God had specially prepared the way, or where social hindrances were few, results have been rapid. In small communities, which were vicious and wretched, vital changes soon became apparent. The South Sea Islanders, the Hottentot and Kaffir tribes, American Indians, races which had been enslaved, were early affected by the message of God's love. Simple nations, like the Karéns of Burmah and the Koles in Bengal, have been drawn to the Church in large numbers. The civilized and populous empires have moved more slowly; and those have held out longest, among whom, as in India, caste ties are peculiarly strong, and the penalties threatened against any change of religion are most formidable. Even from such societies, however, individual converts of the highest excellence have been won, amid hard fights and struggles;—have manfully professed their faith, and have borne the loss of all things to maintain it.

Without altogether denying these facts, the opponents of missions endeavour at least to weaken their force. These converts, it is said, "have been bribed and bought over." They are "Rice Christians." This explanation of an unacceptable phenomenon was originated a long while ago, and is constantly repeated by those who know little of the matter. Several answers may be given to the allegation. We might ask,—Is such a system of bribery at all probable? Is it likely that religious men, men whom we know, men whose honesty and fair dealing

are a conspicuous feature of their character, would be willing so to degrade themselves, and try to deceive both God and man? Is it likely that they would wish to build up by hypocrisy a Church which hypocrisy must speedily ruin? Apart, however, from all probabilities, let us look at the numbers of our converts, and the proofs which they have given that they are sincere.

In his recently published lectures, the Rev. Dr. Anderson, the able Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions, gives a valuable statistical view of the results of modern missions. With a few corrections from late returns, the results appear as follows :—Churches or congregations, 2,500; Church members or communicants, 273,000; nominal Christians, young and old, 1,350,000. The Gospel is taught, and Christian work is carried on, in four thousand centres of usefulness outside the bounds of Christendom. Dr. Lowrie, of New York, distributes the communicants thus :

American Indians	8,200	Western Asia	3,155
West Indies	80,000	India and Ceylon ..	50,000
Madagascar	10,000	Burmah and Siam...	12,000
West Africa	14,100	China	3,580
South Africa ..	30,400	Polynesia	61,400

The true answer to all doubters is furnished by the proofs which abound of the converts' sincerity. As in the Acts of the Apostles, so in the letters, journals, and addresses of missionaries, constant reference is made to the conversion of masses and the conversion of individuals. These papers abound with details of the names, history, and experience of individuals who have professed their faith. And any one who will make these records a study, will find in them remarkable testimony to the power of the Gospel, and strange illustrations of the modes in which it affects men's hearts. The young, the

old, the healthy, the sick, the dying, are arrested by a sermon, in the school, in a conversation, by a prayer. A great warrior is the first man on an island to embrace the Gospel. Another rejects it, holds out to the last, but when he comes to die receives it like a child. A princess like Keopuolani, a warlike chief like Africaner, once the terror of the Cape Colony, accept it with all their hearts. Hundreds of cases are recorded in which the hopes of the Gospel have brightened the hours of the dying; and thousands in which the truth embraced has governed and enlightened the whole of life. "My brethren and sisters," said a native of an island which Cook found all heathen, "this is my resolve: the dust shall never cover my Bible; the moth shall never eat it; the mildew shall never rot it; it is my light, my joy."

That special proof of sincerity which has been afforded in all ages by steadfastness under persecution, has not been wanting in the present day. Such persecutions have not been few. The fanaticism of Catholic priests, unchecked by a French governor, has followed Protestant converts in Polynesia for long years; yet their faith has not failed. In violent outbreaks, like that at Ephesus, Christians have been beaten, their houses rifled, and many have lost their lives. The question of dress in Travancore, of water in the Deccan, of roads in Tinnevely, has roused priests and people into fierce opposition. Mohammedan and Kurd fanaticism has scattered and peeled the Nestorian converts till nothing was left to them but life. In the Indian mutiny many native Christians were exposed to lawless mobs, and suffered loss and injury in various ways before order was again restored. To the noble army of martyrs not a few have been added in our own day.

Again, out of these native Churches have sprung indi-

viduals who have devoted themselves to the Church's work with an energy and self-denial which English ministers do not surpass. Evangelists, catechists, and pastors have everywhere offered themselves to carry the Gospel onward, and, especially in Polynesia, have been distinguished for the heroism with which, in the fulfilment of their commission, they have borne the privations and sufferings to which they were exposed. All missions can tell of such useful labourers; but there are some, who, by their gifts and graces, have been distinguished among their fellows. Take three cases.

Sau Quala has for many years been well-known among missionaries in India and Burmah. A Karen, born in Tavoy, he heard the first sermon preached by the first convert of that mission. For many years he accompanied his minister in his journeys among the hills of his native province, founding and building up the young Churches; and was to all their members an object of peculiar confidence and affection. On the annexation of Pegu, he was invited to join the new mission at Toungu; and it was for several years under his sole charge. In three years, under a ministry distinguished for its spiritual power, thirty Churches were founded, containing two thousand members, baptized by himself. His labours, his journeyings, his vigils, his unwearied self-denial, were truly apostolical; he was the "prince of preachers" among the Karen tribes of the Toungu hills. All this while he received no regular salary, and lived upon the gifts presented by his grateful people. The Commissioner of Toungu offered him a handsome income as overseer of the tribes for the English Government; but he declined both the position and the pay. He has lived thus among his people for seventeen years, honoured and beloved by the thousands he has brought to Christ; honoured for his lofty Christian character,

and by the blessing which God has given to his efforts. He is well-known to all the English in Burmah, and by no one is he more truly trusted and esteemed than by the late Chief Commissioner, Sir Arthur Phayre.

One of the native ministers of the Church Missionary Society in Tinnevely was spoken of in the highest terms for "his affection, his simplicity, his honesty and straightforwardness, his amazing pulpit talents, and his profound humility." Mr. Thomas says :—"The last sermon I heard from him was, without exception, the greatest sermon I ever heard. Never did I hear Christ so exalted by human tongue. The effect was perfectly overwhelming."

Dr. Anderson describes the character and work of Bartimeus, a blind preacher in the Sandwich Islands. From a most degraded condition, he rose in a few years to be a devout, eloquent, and successful preacher of the Word. His mind was richly stored with Scripture passages, and he could quote them with remarkable ease and correctness. With a heart full of love to his people, he would warn them in the most touching terms, and would beseech them to flee from wrath to come. To men like him; to men such as Papeiha, the first teacher in Rarotonga; Davida, the evangelizer of Mangaia; Tataio, the apostle of Máre; and many others, is largely due the evangelization of the most important islands won by the South Sea Mission.

The defects of our native converts are well-known to missionaries, and are readily acknowledged. An attentive reader of their letters and reports will find these deficiencies often referred to. They are just what might be expected, just what we see in the converts of Apostolic times. Individuals and communities whose habits had been formed in heathenism may, under the teaching of missionaries, accept the principles of the New

Testament; but it may be long, after severe struggles and many falls, before their habits are so changed, before good habits so take the place of evil ones, as to make principle and habit coincide. A missionary may be saddened by many a fall on the part of his people. An epidemic of drunkenness, following the visit of some sea-captain, may pass through a settlement; the old restlessness and sensitiveness and pride may burst out in war; individuals may break the Seventh Commandment; even a whole community may think lightly of such sins. Nevertheless, these converts are far more virtuous than they once were. They do not approve these faults, they fight against them; offenders are placed under discipline; and an effort is made to keep the Churches and congregations pure. Often have the heathen acknowledged the difference between the Christians and themselves: "You Christians do not permit these things to go unpunished." To the men who know the facts most fully, the wonder is, not that so many need reproof, but that such a multitude are raised.

Not long ago this conclusion was challenged by one who is an earnest friend of missions, but who both considers that the number of converts does not correspond to the work actually done, and accounts for the failure by asserting that the heathen are repelled by the common doctrine respecting future punishment. Either the doctrine is not preached at all, and so the motive of terror is lost: or, if preached, it repels hearers from the Christian system offered for their acceptance. But, on the one hand, I cannot admit that the progress has been slow, or that our victories have been poor. Certain countries, provinces, and cities, have been very dead to the Gospel; but these cases are not numerous, and can be accounted for. The general result has been encouraging in the highest degree. On the other hand, I

do not think that the preaching referred to has been to any extent a difficulty. In defence of the doctrine of future punishment, it has usually sufficed to show enquiring heathens that men are punished by a just God, not for the mere opinions they have held, but for the actual wrong-doing of which they have been guilty.

The real difficulty in the reception of the Gospel has, in all countries, been not the future, but the present. The social penalties inflicted on a believer, to which our Lord referred,—penalties to be suffered now,—have proved to many an enquirer a greater terror than any prospect in the future world. “The brother shall deliver the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.” Public and social opinion has often been opposed to the progress of the Gospel; and in the two great Eastern Empires the conservative habits of centuries have intensified that opposition, and have raised up a barrier in the way of Christian profession, truly formidable to the upper classes of society, which social opinions most largely influence. The loss and shame and persecution so produced have proved a difficulty to which the doctrinal teaching was not to be compared.

With one thing strongly implied in this discussion, though but partially expressed, I heartily concur. If missionaries abroad, as well as ministers at home, desire to preach the Gospel with real power, they must bring largely into their preaching, as one element of its vitality, an intense realization of the eternal world. Is it true that these millions are without excuse? Is it true that the fearful, the abominable, the vicious, the idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the second death? Is it true, with this doom before him, that “Whosoever will, may take the water of life freely;” and that “Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by

him?" Then how earnest, how tender, how faithful should the ambassadors for Christ be; warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ. As I write these words I see Richard Knill once more upon the platform, pleading with earnest eyes and uplifted hand:—"Brethren, the heathen are perishing; shall we let them perish? God forbid."

No low estimate ought to be put on this result of our missionary operations, the Churches and the converts which have been gathered by their influence. Here are two hundred and seventy thousand men and women, not only introduced into the Church of Christ, on a credible profession of their faith, but giving evidence of its genuineness in improved and consistent lives. We have rescued them from heathenism, from the advocacy and practice of error, from unchecked vice and crime. We have elevated not only them, but their children; we have saved them as neighbours, as fellow-citizens, as nations. We have won their intelligence, their literature, their material resources, their public law. Christ has placed His sanctifying hand on all they have and all they are. For His service He claims all the varieties of their character, all the diversities of their national life.

What a vast array of beauty do those varieties involve. If in our national exhibitions of fruit and flowers, the oranges of Malta lose nothing beside the grapes of sunny France; if the roses of England appear in place by the gorgeous rhododendrons of India; and the blue forget-me-nots and gentians of the Alps hold their ground by the side of the lilies and dahlias, the azaleas and orchids of other lands; if in our English landscape,

" Town and village, dome and farm,
Each gives each a double charm,
Like pearls upon an Ethiop's arm ;—"

so is it with the Church of Christ. To that Church every nation must bring its own contribution of beauty, strength, and glory. Already that tribute is gathering, and increases in its wealth every year. In the green damasked chapels of Peking, with their vermillion pillars ; in the jungles of the Karens ; among the hills of Armenia ; amid the deep swamps of the Gulf of Guinea and the palm groves of Jamaica ; among the ferns of Raiatea, and around the great crater of Hawaii ; in the villages of Christian Cherokees and Dakotahs ; and on the prosperous farms of the milk-eaters of Russia ; preachers and people may differ in their buildings, their dress, their melodies, their languages : but one Name is on their lips, one song rises to the skies. “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God ;” “ He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of all the earth.” “ Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

II. These general results may be shown more distinctly in certain fields of missionary labour. The South Sea Islands, as they were the first of those fields to be occupied, so have they been one of the most fascinating to the labourers, and one of the most distinguished for their success. They may, therefore, fitly be examined before others. The world long since contemplated with wonder the strange picture drawn of the Polynesian races by the great navigator who first made them fully known. Yet Cook and Vancouver were only the beginning of a long line of able seamen who have surveyed the Pacific, have protected the commerce that floats across its stormy seas, and have told the same tale. Even adventurers who have hated missionaries, and found them a terrible hindrance to their lawless schemes, cannot vary the story. And the picture is dark indeed. Though a manly

people, kind-hearted and hospitable to strangers ; yet they are suspicious, sensitive, quick to avenge a slight ; cruel in war, cruel to slaves. Vicious in the extreme ; with some alleviations, they have seemed determined to crowd the horrors of life into a narrow compass, and to show how low in the scale of humanity some barbarous races can descend. Without hesitation living men were buried alive to uphold the pillars of a royal dwelling-house ; canoes were launched into the sea over the bodies of living prisoners of war ! Who can forget the long hair, the outstretched spears, the threatening gestures of the men of Niue, which Cook in consequence called *Savage Island* ? Where do we find it otherwise now on the hundreds of islands that still remain untouched by the Gospel ?

Four of the principal missionary Societies have laboured among the isolated groups of East and South Polynesia from the commencement of the present century. The missionaries went to these degraded tribes as men. They were totally unknown, they had no force to compel attention or even to protect their lives. They had no ships, no guns, no funds for bribes. Their whole strength lay in love. Words of kindness, words of wisdom, thoughtful attention to the suffering and the sick, were their instruments of power. Their influence sprang from their character, their spirit, the skill which they displayed ; it was derived from within, not from without. They were often misrepresented by runaway convicts and by vicious crews. In the early days several were murdered, and a few grew weary of the suffering and the toil. But as a body they held on, amid privations, discouragements, and trials of no ordinary kind. They mastered the languages and wrote them down ; they prepared and printed the first books. They conversed, they explained, they taught, they preached. Fifty years ago

there were only twenty such men in all the South Sea Islands.

In the Tahitian Mission, founded at the close of the last century, the difficulties, the privation, the loneliness, borne by the English labourers were very great. Supplies failed the missionaries repeatedly. The barbarism, the utter degradation of the people, were painful in the extreme. But at length one Tahitian, then another began to pray, and idolatry soon fell. Pomare had kindly dispositions, and saw the excellence of the Gospel; but he was a slave to terrible vices, and his last days were very dark. His relative, Tamatoa, the King of Raiatea, a brave warrior and a good king, was a humble, spiritual Christian; he governed his people with wisdom and firmness, and died exhorting them to lay fast hold of the Gospel. From island to island the new faith spread steadily and with rapidity. The native evangelists were foremost in the enterprise, and bravely offered to carry the Gospel among people who threatened their lives. Thus the Harvey group were added; then Samoa was Christianized; the Loyalty Islands followed: God's Providence ever went before His people, and opened their way. The work of instructing, elevating, and leading the Churches onward has been hard, but men have been found to do it faithfully, and great has been their reward. Nothing in the native religions, or even in their vicious institutions, has been able to withstand the Gospel. Cannibalism, cruelties, dark immoralities, infanticide, idolatry, have all disappeared. Drink has proved a stronger foe than idolatry; and wandering sailors and captains selling spirits, have been the tempters whose vices and whose greed have brought sorrow into many a home.

The Sandwich Islands, containing in Cook's time a hundred thousand people, have long been Christian, and

have risen to a higher condition of civilization than any other group in Polynesia. The oppressive restrictions of the *tabu*, from which the people in general revolted, and the strange news which had reached them from Tahiti, that Pomare and Tamatoa had flung away their idols, prepared the Hawaiians to do the same. Like Coifi, in the kingdom of Deira, the priests themselves led the way; and when, in 1820, the American missionaries arrived, they found the idols gone. Several of the converts who were easily won to Christianity were persons of distinguished excellence. One of the most impressive events which attended the overthrow of the ancient system, was the visit of the Princess Keopuolani to the great crater of Hawaii, that she might prove to the people the futility of their fears of the wrath of Pele; and her safe return from amidst the volcanic fires produced a profound impression in favour of the new religion. In 1837 a remarkable revival of religion took place throughout the islands, and more than a fourth of the adult population were added to the Church. From various causes the population of the group has been diminished, but one-third of the inhabitants are at this time in the communion of the Church, of whom eight hundred were received in 1868. They are associated in thirty native Churches, which have native pastors supported by their people. These Churches support thirteen native missionaries, chosen from among themselves, in the Marquesas Islands, and in Mikronesia; and last year they contributed £6,000 for various Christian objects. Mr. Manley Hopkins, in his able book on the Sandwich Islands, has by no means done justice to the American mission. He has forgotten that the King and Queen, on whose behalf it was written, obtained all their education and enlightenment from that mission, which they so strangely set aside. Nevertheless, he cannot help acknowledging that the missionaries have

done a great work, and that God has given to their work a remarkable blessing.

The work of the Church Missionary Society in New Zealand deserves honourable mention in any story of mission-work in the Pacific. The Maoris are a noble race, and bade fair to be a strong, Christian people, holding an honourable place in the world's history. But the "King-movement," occasioned by the never-ceasing pressure of the English colonists, brought on a series of contests which have ruined their once pleasant prospects. The old spirit has returned to the people; constant war has expended their resources, their numbers have diminished; a dark cloud rests on their future, and ere long they will probably be wholly extinguished.

Perhaps the most remarkable successes in Polynesia are those of the Wesleyan Mission in Fiji. The Fiji Islands, eighty in number, contain a population of two hundred thousand people. Thirty years ago they were all cannibals, and were cruel and degraded in the extreme. The volume written by Captain Erskine, R.N., describes blacker horrors and vices as prevalent among them than among any other tribes which the *Havannah* visited. Seamen dreaded these islands; if one day they were hospitably entertained, the next they were liable to be murdered. But the Wesleyan missionaries have met all the difficulties of their position with fidelity, self-denial, and courage. One-half the native population is professedly Christian; twenty-two thousand are Church members; thirty thousand are in the schools. Cannibalism, polygamy, and infanticide are fast passing away. Here also the New Zealand difficulty has arisen in recent days; and it is feared that the native race, saved at length from its vices, will fade away in presence of the white men now swarming to its shores.

The most striking trophy of Christian labour in the

Pacific is the evangelizing of Savage Island. In the magnitude of the victory it does not compare with Fiji, with Samoa, or even with Tahiti; its people are only five thousand in number; but that victory must be measured by the obstacles which were overcome. They were not the only wild men in those seas, but they were determined to allow no stranger to land on their shores and live. Perhaps disease had alarmed them, or some tradition of former suffering from invaders had occasioned that resolve. Whatever the cause, they kept it steadily before them from one generation to another. This was the secret of their refusal to let Cook land. Erskine saw them, and treated them well. At last Mr. Williams got two men away in his *Messenger of Peace*. Eventually, the island and people were conquered by a devoted native evangelist, Paulo, and the work has been ably built up and completed by an English missionary. To restore its people to intercourse with the rest of mankind, to lead them to the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to wipe away all their heathenism, has been the work of seventeen years. They are all nominal Christians now, and twelve hundred of them are Church members.

In more than three hundred islands of Eastern and Southern Polynesia, the Gospel has swept heathenism entirely away. The four great Societies, which have sent their brethren forth as messengers of mercy, have gathered four hundred thousand people into Christ's fold, of whom a quarter of a million are living still, and of whom fifty thousand are communicants. These Societies have together expended on the process less than £1,200,000, a sum which will not suffice for the construction of a London railway, and will hardly furnish the navy with six ironclads. Yet how wonderful the fruit of their toil. "The wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard

lies down with the kid." The destruction of life has been stayed; feuds between families and tribes have died out under the soothing influence of Christian love. The hideous rites and vices of their fathers have all disappeared. Civilization has sprung up naturally in the regenerated and obedient heart. Beautiful as were these lands by nature, culture has rendered them more lovely still. The white chapel and school have taken the place of the blood-stained marai. The trim cottage, which Christianity has given them, peeps everywhere from its nook of leaves. Public law in written codes governs alike chiefs and people. Resources have multiplied; industry has provided household comforts never before attainable; wealth has begun to accumulate. Every island has its roads; cultivated gardens abound on every side. The Sabbath is observed better than in England. Large Churches have been gathered; the children attend school; good men and good women are numerous. Not a few have offered themselves as missionaries to heathen islands, and in zeal, self-sacrifice, and patient service have equalled the earnest men of other climes. In view of results like these,—results toiled for, results expected, successes promised,—shall we not say in thankfulness,—What hath God wrought!

In the midst of our joyful thanksgivings, the ground and reason of which have been tested year after year by the men who know the work best, the late Mr. Buckle boldly steps in, and in his calm, authoritative way pronounces the whole a fable:—

"Men of excellent intentions, and full of a fervent though mistaken zeal, have been, and still are, attempting to propagate their own religion among the inhabitants of barbarous countries. By strenuous and unremitting activity, and frequently by promises, and even by actual gifts, they have in many cases persuaded savage communities to make a profession of the Catholic religion. But whoever will compare the triumphant reports of the missionaries with the long chain of evidence

supplied by competent travellers, will soon find that such profession is only nominal, and that these ignorant tribes have adopted, indeed, the ceremonies of the new religion, but have by no means adopted the religion itself."

It would be wholly beneath the self-respect of missionaries to notice the cool assertion, that they have employed direct bribery in winning the quarter of a million converts whom they have gathered in Polynesia alone. But nothing is more proper than to appeal to "competent travellers;" and, strange to say, in Polynesia the captains of the Royal Navy, who have often visited the mission-stations, almost without exception, give evidence directly opposed to Mr. Buckle's sweeping assertions. Let us listen to one of the most "competent" of these travellers, the late Admiral Fitzroy:—

"To the exertions of the London Missionary Society," he says, "I for one can bear the most ample testimony, for I have seen the effects myself. . . . I have been with the natives at the top of the mountains, when no eye was upon them, but that of a stranger whom they might never see again, and the conduct of the natives of Otaheite was just as correct; they were as sincere in their morning and evening prayers, and in the manner in which they spoke of the exertions of the missionaries among the neighbouring islands, as in the low country near the sea, where the missionaries resided,"

Another competent traveller, Admiral Wilkes, of the United States' Navy, speaks as clearly on the same topic:—

"The external signs of moral and religious improvement are conspicuous. Many of the natives are scrupulous in their attention to Christian duties, and are members in communion with the Church. All are strict observers of the Sabbath. Nowhere, indeed, is its institution more religiously attended to than in those Polynesian islands which are under missionary influence."

One of the warmest testimonies offered to the usefulness of missionary work, is also one of the most recent. It is given by a gentleman who visited the Navigator's

Islands in Her Majesty's screw-steamer *Brisk*, and may be found in the "Blackwood" of January, 1868.

"We have said that the London Missionary Society has the spiritual care of the Samoan Islands. The first missionaries were established there about thirty years ago, but the group had been frequently visited by them previously to that date. With what zeal and devotedness these excellent men have laboured, needs not here to be enlarged upon. With respect to the success that has attended their labours, it is sufficient to say that all heathen and barbarous practices have been abolished ; Christianity is firmly established ; life and property are as secure as in England, nay, more so, as theft is almost unknown ; the morals of the people have been greatly improved ; a general system of education prevails ; and the Bible is admirably translated, and in the hands of every member of the community. The difficulties which the missionaries in Samoa had to contend with were certainly far less than in many other islands in these seas. Here were no bloodthirsty, ferocious cannibals, but a mild and gentle race, well disposed towards strangers, with no elaborate system of idolatry to overthrow ; so that the mission was established without difficulty, and the progress was rapid and continued. So apt and intelligent are this people, that Samoa very soon became a centre of missionary enterprise, sending forth trained native teachers to other islands."

Only to one other class of witnesses do we appeal, who render a silent testimony which cannot be gainsayed. It is not merely Admiral Fitzroy and Captain Erskine, and Admiral Wilkes, who testify to the reality of these results ; but to these Christian islands, where sailors were once afraid to land, hundreds of whalers run gladly every year to get the refreshment which their hard toil renders so grateful. From icebergs and boundless seas, and heavy gales of wind ; from the exciting chase, the capture, the boiling down of their huge prey ; and from all the filthy, weary work of whaling life, they now run north to Fiji and Samoa, Tahiti and Rarotonga ; not only to refit their vessels and to replace their broken gear, but to buy fresh meat and vegetables and coffee ; to get medicine for their sick ; to revel in oranges, plantains, and water-melons ; to feast the eye on green mountains and cultured

valleys; to walk among white cottages and flower gardens and groves of palms; to attend Sabbath services, and be reminded of their Christian training and their Christian homes. Where have unaided men, however wise, produced a moral change like this? With us the Gospel alone has done it, and to God we give all the praise.

III. No sphere of missionary labour has been more strangely transformed by the Gospel than the island of Madagascar. The course which that labour took, and the marvellous results which have followed it, far surpass anything of a similar kind, even in Apostolic days. And if the story could be fully and worthily told, it would be found more thrilling in its incidents than the pages of a romance. In many respects Madagascar is a fitting scene for such a history. One of the noblest islands in the world, nine hundred miles in length and three hundred broad, its level coasts are enriched with the abundance of tropical life, while its central table-lands enjoy the milder climate, and are clothed with the varied products of the temperate zone. Beautiful to the eye are its vast forests, its chains of lofty hills, its smiling pastures and well-watered fields. Ages ago Arab and Persian merchants brought their long pattamars with their huge eyes into its harbours to traffic in slaves; and their sailors carried back, like Sinbad, marvellous legends about its wonderful plants, and its gigantic birds, with their huge talons and enormous eggs. Dimly known in Europe through the reports of Marco Paolo, stray vessels from the fleets of Vasco di Gama and of Albuquerque must have looked with interest on its lofty mountains and fertile valleys; and often, in their visits to Johanna, must its riches have been heard of by the vessels of that English trading Company, which had already begun to grasp the crown of India.

Peopled chiefly by tribes of Malay and Polynesian origin, who probably reached the island at different epochs; and partly colonized by immigrants from the African coasts and by the mercantile classes of Arabia and Persia; traditional jealousies for ages kept its races separate, and often involved the land in war. Even throughout the last century the island was full of petty kingdoms, and the towering hills of Ankova, like the droogs of the Mysore, were crowned with fortresses, the capitals of independent kingdoms, whose mutual struggles hindered all progress, and kept the tribes in poverty and wretchedness. It was only fifty years ago that the genius of Radama, aided by a disciplined army, brought the whole island for the first time under the rule of the Hovas. In recent years the conquest was completed by that humane and kindly government of his son, which won all hearts.

Since their introduction to other nations, the Malagasy have shown themselves an intelligent, enterprising people, ingenious in their manufactures, careful in money matters, with a warm love of liberty, and ambitious of an honourable place in the world's history. Their morals were very defective, and their civilization comparatively poor. Even in the present day no roads exist throughout the island; except the tracks worn by the feet of labourers, by the great herds of cattle, or by gangs of slaves.

The mission was founded in 1818, and from the first received the warm sympathy and support of the enlightened King who had invited its members to his capital. Before Radama died in 1828 it had supplied the people with excellent schools, the use of the printing press, and considerable knowledge of improved mechanical arts; and it had laid a broad and deep foundation for the enlightenment of the nation at large. During his reign also were sown those seeds of spiritual life and

Christian principle which produced a strong native Church, and were destined to secure a solid religious reformation of the entire country. At the time of Radama's death there were four thousand young people in the schools, many of whom belonged to noble families; Bible-classes were established among them; and several individuals had been baptized.

Radama was succeeded by one of his queens, Rana-valona, who, to secure her power, waded through scenes of slaughter and cruelty of the most appalling kind. Unlike her husband, she had a most bigoted attachment to the ancient idolatries of the country; and as soon as she found herself firm upon the throne, she set her face against all change. For a while she sanctioned the schools, believing them to be useful; and encouraged those improvements in the arts which stimulated industry; and, strangely enough, it was under her sanction that the missionaries printed the greater portion of those Malagasy scriptures, which during dark days were to sustain the faith which the Queen in bitter hatred was seeking to destroy.

Ere long the fact became apparent that the words of the English teachers were leading some of her people to doubt and to forsake the religion of their fathers. They were anxious to keep a day holy, which the government did not recognize as such; to meet for worship as others did not; and to pray to the God of the missionaries, not to the old kings and gods of the country, whom all their companions revered. She proceeded cautiously in her resistance to these innovations, in which she was upheld by the priests and a strong party in the government. Before the end of 1831 the observance of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper was forbidden, first to the soldiers, and then to the people at large. Before two years had passed one and another of the missionaries

was commanded to quit the country, till only two remained. In 1835 the increase in the number of Christian believers, and the deep dislike of the idolatrous party to all change, brought matters to a crisis. On the first of March a proclamation was issued forbidding the profession of Christianity, and commanding all Christians to confess their crime, or suffer death.

The first terror and agitation passed, the course to be adopted was promptly chosen. Multitudes of those who had attended worship and possessed Christian books, confessed their fault and submitted to the Queen; amongst them four hundred officers were deprived of their honours, and two thousand others were fined. From the first a large number of converts refused to submit, and resolved to die rather than deny the Saviour. By degrees they became known to each other; and, like the Covenanters and other persecuted saints, they met in forests, on the tops of mountains, or in lonely houses at the dead of night, to read the Scriptures and pray together, and to strengthen each other's faith. Their earliest gatherings gave them peculiar comfort, and were long remembered when many who had attended them were in exile or in chains. They found that they possessed seventy Bibles; a considerable number of copies of the New Testament and Psalms; and various Christian books. They had also eight copies of the "Pilgrim's Progress" in manuscript.

Great efforts were made by their persecutors to discover the leading Christians. It was hoped that with the departure of the last of the English missionaries the new faith would die out; and it was a great disappointment when the converts were found to be meeting still. In 1837 ten were apprehended and condemned to slavery. As under the Roman Empire, so now, the evidence of their crime was furnished by slaves, by idolatrous relatives, or by debtors who were anxious to escape their obligations.

On the 14th of August the first martyr, Rasalama, a noble Christian woman, was speared. A year after, Rafaralahy, who had attended her to the last, and was a true helper of the scattered converts, followed her. Eighteen in all were speared on the spot where these martyrs suffered ; and the calm courage they displayed, their perfect steadfastness, their joy in death, excited the amazement of the heathen crowds who saw them die. Of the character and sufferings of a most courageous woman, Rafaravavy, we cannot now speak. She was loaded with chains, and on two occasions narrowly escaped being put to death ; she was sold into slavery, but made her escape, and eventually reached the Mauritius and came to England. Simeon and David, leaders among the Christians, also fled. Having money of their master's, "their first concern was to draw up an accurate account of all sales and receipts and to leave this paper with what remained of his property. The oppressor was astonished, and exclaimed : 'These would have made excellent servants, if they would but leave off their religion.'" Others fled with them, and the hair-breadth escapes which, during six months, were experienced by the little band of fugitives, were truly marvellous. During the first eight years of trial, seventeen were put to death ; two hundred at least became fugitives ; hundreds more were in chains or slavery. The wonderful fidelity of these young converts to their Master and to each other ; their patience under great privation ; their noble endurance, when submission would in a moment have brought comfort ; called forth the gratitude and the admiration of Christians throughout the world. On only one point did they acknowledge that they were "much afflicted." Their Bibles were quite worn out !

In 1845 the persecutors were bitterly reminded that there was One stronger than they. "He that sitteth in

the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision." Under the influence of an eloquent preacher, Rainaka, the Christians in the capital, on three occasions, boldly assembled for worship; and in a short time a hundred converts were added to their number. Among them were Rakoto, the Queen's only son; also the favourite nephew of her co-persecutor, the Commander-in-chief; and Ramonja, the prince's cousin, a son of the Queen's sister. Respecting the prince the Christians wrote: "He comes regularly with us into the woods on Sunday to pray and sing and read the Bible; he often takes some of us home with him to explain to him the word of truth; and he keeps his mother from doing us any harm." The prince was a very humane man, who objected strongly to the cruelties of the persecution; and for sixteen years on many occasions he stood between the converts and the penalties with which they were threatened. A very earnest spirit was poured out upon the Christians at this time. A hundred and fifty of them were teachers of small Bible-classes of selected scholars; and great numbers visited the Christians who were in prison, to hear from them the Word of God.

The persecutors were greatly enraged when they saw the failure of their efforts, and felt how close the new religion had come to themselves. A new effort, therefore was resolved on. In February, 1849, nine Christians were consigned to prison, and a public assembly was called to hear the Queen's views:—"I have deprived officers of their honour, have put some to death, reduced others to slavery, and you still persevere in practising this new religion. What is the reason why you will not renounce it?" With a marvellous boldness, two Christians stood up and replied:—"We are restrained by reverence for God and His law." With all their earnestness, their deep spiritual enjoyment, and their strength of principle, there

was no unhealthy enthusiasm, no ill-regulated zeal, which gave them an undue desire for a martyr's crown, or led them to fling away life by accusing themselves. They were bold and fearless when accused ; but they were eminently calm and truthful in their testimony ; and the solidity of their faith and joy in God not only amazed the multitude, but drew many to their side. "Do you pray to the sun, or the moon, or the earth?" asked the officer. "I do not pray to these," was the answer, "for the hand of God made them." "Do you pray to the twelve sacred mountains?" "I do not pray to them, for they are mountains." "Do you pray to the idols that render sacred the kings?" "I do not pray to them, for the hand of man made them." "Do you pray to the ancestors of the sovereigns?" "Kings and rulers are given by God, that we should serve and obey them, and render them homage. Nevertheless, they are only men like ourselves. When we pray, we pray to God alone."

The official enquiries made at this time, and the edicts pronounced, show emphatically that the Christian converts were a holy people ; not a crime is even hinted at except the observance of the foreign religion. Their practices are constantly described, in language like the following :—

"These are the things which shall not be done, saith the Queen. The saying to others, believe and obey the Gospel ; the practice of baptism ; the keeping of the Sabbath as a day of rest ; the refusing to swear by one's father or mother, or sister or brother ; and the refusing to be sworn, with a stubbornness like that of bullocks, or stones, or wood ; the taking of a little bread and the juice of the grape, and asking a blessing to rest on the crown of your heads ; and kneeling down upon the ground and praying, and rising from prayer with drops of water falling from your noses, and with tears rolling down from your eyes."

Under this revival of the persecuting spirit, in a few days nineteen Christians, conspicuous for their character

and zeal, were apprehended, and it was resolved to make a severe example. All were condemned to die; the four nobles (one of them a lady) were ordered to be burned alive; fifteen others were to be thrown over a precipice. At one o'clock the night before their execution, a large gathering of their companions secretly took place, not to break prison or attempt a rescue, but to commend the sufferers specially to God in prayer. "At one at night, we met together and prayed." With the early dawn the whole city was astir; it had been whispered that the Christians were to die, and an immense multitude gathered to witness the sight.

On the west side of Antananarivo, is a steep precipice of granite, a hundred-and-fifty feet high; the terrace above which, had long been used as a place of execution. Above the terrace the ground rises rapidly to the crest of the ridge, on which the city is built, and on which the palace enclosure, with its lofty dwellings, stands conspicuous. Beneath the precipice the ground is a mass of jagged rocks and boulders, upon which the unhappy criminal would fall headlong, when rolled or thrown over the ledge. The refined cruelty which invented this terrible punishment has, in the modern world, been repeated in but one country and among one people, the half-savage population of Mexico. Through the thousands that had crowded every point of the sloping hill, the condemned brethren were carried, wrapped in mats and slung on poles. But they prayed and sang as they passed along the roadway; "and some who beheld them, said that their faces were like the faces of angels." One by one they were thrown over the precipice, the rest looking on. "Will you cease to pray?" was the only question. "No," was the firm answer in every case. And in a moment the faithful martyr lay bleeding, and mangled, and dead, among the rocks below.

The terrors of the day were not yet over. At the north end of the city, on the crest of the ridge, preparations were made for burning the four condemned nobles ; and stakes, faggots, and iron chains were duly provided. But the same fidelity, the same true courage of heart, which an undoubting faith had given to their brethren already slain, animated these martyrs also. With calm front they walked together, through an excited crowd, singing hymns of gladness. On one side, at a short distance, stood a group of Christians waving their last adieu. At another point stood soldiers and heathen, who asked, "Where is Jehovah now ? Why does He not come and take you away ?" When fastened to the stake they sang the well-known hymn :—

"There is a blessed land,
Making most happy ;
Never thence shall rest depart,
Nor cause of sorrow come."

As they sang, a rainbow arched the heavens, one foot of which seemed to rest on the spot where they suffered. Prayer followed praise, "O Lord, receive our spirits, and lay not this sin to their charge." "Thus they prayed as long as they had any life. Then they died, but softly, gently : indeed, gently was the going forth of their life. And astonished were all the people around, that beheld the burning of them there."

Long and bitter was the renewed trial, of which these terrible scenes were the beginning. The sufferings of 1849, the Christians themselves call "the great persecution." Before it moderated, more than a hundred were flogged and condemned to work in chains ; many were heavily fined ; nobles were reduced to the position of labourers and slaves, and were condemned to the heaviest tasks, in felling trees, in dragging timber, or quarrying and carrying stone. Altogether nineteen hundred and

three received a definite punishment, because they believed in Jesus, or sympathized with those who did so. Even the Queen's nephew was heavily fined, and stripped of all his "honours." But he bore the disgrace with meek submission, and continued still to help the Christians, who felt for him the highest regard.

For a time the Churches "had rest, and were edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." Their earnest cry was still for the Scriptures, their copies of which were gradually being worn out, or were ruined by the weather, or were discovered and destroyed. Most touching tales are told of their attachment to the few leaves that a family possessed ; of the long passages, and books, which individuals committed to memory ; one earnest worker, it is said, became blind by incessantly copying the Divine Word for his brethren's use. In 1852, the Prime Minister, who, next to the Queen, was the chief persecutor, died. His son was a Christian ; the Queen was compelled to lean on her own son's advice more than before ; and it was even hoped that she would abdicate in his favour.

But these hopes were frustrated. Nine years of sorrow had still to be borne. Another great effort was yet to be made to destroy the young and vigorous Church, the "burning bush" which had not been "consumed : " and so "the dragon came forth, having great wrath, knowing that he had but a short time." In July, 1857, the hate and anger of the Queen blazed out as fiercely as ever. "There were Christians still among her people ; she had discovered that there were thousands in the capital ; every one knew how she hated the sect ; she would punish the guilty with death." Search was made everywhere ; some Christians were tortured to make them name their companions ; nevertheless few were discovered and proved guilty, out of thousands who were within

reach. The rage of the Queen knew no bounds. "She would search the rivers, and lakes, and the bowels of the earth, that not one Christian might escape." Within fifteen days, fourteen converts were stoned to death, on a new spot, a mile from the city. And iron rings and heavy manacles were prepared, in which gangs of seven were chained together, suffering intense weariness and pain. Sixty individuals, men and women, were so fastened, and were paraded in the public markets, that their pain might strike terror into others. To their everlasting honour be it recorded, that not one apostatized. Several died in their chains, others bore the terrible burden for four years, and were freed only when the new reign brought to the oppressed nation that peace and liberty, which for an entire generation, neither heathen nor Christian had known. The last effort of rage spent itself. "The wind ceased and there was a great calm." In 1861, the persecuting Queen, bitter to the last, was stricken with death, and after lingering in weakness for several months, quietly passed away. All classes of the people were jubilant with delight, and the persecuted returned home.

The persecution of the native Church in Madagascar is the most conspicuous example of that form of trial which has occurred in the whole range of modern missions. The hate, the bigotry, the cruelty directed against the Christians and their religion, were as persistent and unrelenting as those displayed by any single individual, or by any government, in any age. The converts were left alone. Their English pastors and counsellors had been driven away. They knew little or nothing of the precedents of Church history. No one had told them to brave stripes, imprisonment, and death. Yet they did it. They did it naturally. They found it in the Book, which they prized as their dearest possession. There they

read, "Fear not them that kill the body;" "We ought to obey God rather than men." They believed that Book sincerely; they loved the Saviour supremely, and "they remembered his words." Therefore they laid down their lives rather than disobey Him. Surely this is to be true converts; this is to be living martyrs, martyrs unto death; "witnesses" that God's grace is all sufficient; that God's love is worth all worlds. Surely here we have evidence, distinct, continued, triumphant, that the old Gospel has not lost its power; that the living Spirit still accompanies the preacher; and that our modern missionary Church has gathered trophies of principle, precisely similar to those which the Apostles and the early Christians won. If, then (as Mr. Lecky says), "noble lives, crowned by heroic deaths, were the best arguments of the infant Church," and if "their enemies, themselves, not unfrequently acknowledged it," we claim from our opponents the same confession now. And we do so the more, that fidelity under persecution, and patient submission under reproach, have not been confined to Madagascar; but in varied forms, and in varied degrees, have been displayed by old and young, in every country in which the Gospel has been preached, and in which its adherents have been subjected to similar penalties.

The genuineness of the piety thus produced in Madagascar, and the faithfulness of God in hearing the prayers of His people, are further illustrated by the Church's recent history. It were long to tell all the strange incidents and vital changes that have been crowded into the story of seven years. Regaining its lost liberty, the Church stood forth at once before the nation "an exceeding great army." In the autumn of 1861, it contained on its rolls more than two thousand members, and the regular congregations soon numbered five thousand persons. Rich in faith, strong in principle, this native Church only needed

a wider range of Scripture knowledge, and some guidance in its public affairs. It was a constituted body, having its pastors and teachers, and it was singularly free from foreign elements. The teachers had drawn their views directly from the New Testament, and they were very earnest in spreading the Gospel around them.

Under the wise guidance of the Rev. W. Ellis, than whom no Englishman was regarded as a truer and dearer personal friend, and with the aid of a staff of able missionaries, new congregations were organized; schools were established; books were compiled and printed; a new edition of the Testament was put in circulation; and all the usual means of grace and instruction were provided.

The additions to the Church were steady, but not too rapid. It was evident, however, that Christian knowledge was general, that conviction was widely spread. It was evident that a profound impression of the real excellence of Christian men and of the Christian religion had been stamped upon the whole nation. But for a while the people were timid, the nobles and the government were cautious; they were afraid of foreigners, and doubted how far Christianity could be made a really national thing. It was well that it should be so, and that time should be allowed for convictions to ripen, that no false step might be taken by any concerned.

Two years ago a true revival of religious feeling was experienced, both by the Christian converts and by the people at large. Every mission in the island shared in it, whether in the interior or on the coast. Like all such revivals, it showed itself at first in increased congregations, containing new hearers, worshipping devoutly, listening intently, and diligently "seeking after" God. Prayer-meetings were frequent and well attended; the Sabbath was well observed. In 1868 twenty thousand persons professed Christianity. During last year the in-

crease must have been even greater. In the island generally the converts are now more than sixty thousand in number, including ten thousand communicants. The chief Churches are in the capital, which is rapidly becoming a Christian city, and in the province of Imerina around it. The Betsileo province also is full of enquirers, for whom a band of missionaries is being provided; and the tribes of Betsimasarakas on the coast, amongst whom the Church Missionary Society labours, are crying out for teachers. Education is spreading widely, and is placed under wise and earnest supervision. The printing-office has been remodelled and enlarged, and efforts of many kinds are being made to promote the general enlightenment of the people. A touching memorial of the dark days, which has given great satisfaction to the Christians, has been secured in the erection of a handsome stone church at each of the five localities where the martyrs suffered. The ground at each place was given specially for that purpose by the late King.

The government of Madagascar, which remains entirely in native hands, has dealt with this progress of Christian conviction in a very satisfactory manner, and has itself undergone important changes. When, eighteen months ago, the new Queen came to the throne, all hesitation seemed to be flung aside. The idols and diviners were quickly put away from the palace; public works were stopped on the Sabbath-day, and Sunday markets were changed to another convenient day. On the occasion of her coronation, the Bible was placed on a table in front of the sovereign: around the canopy over her head were inscribed the words, "Glory to God in the highest; peace on earth; goodwill to men; may God be with us." And the noblest sentiments were embodied in the Royal speech, including this: "This is my word to you, O ye under heaven, in regard to the

praying : it is not enforced, it is not forbidden, for God made you." All this was done by the Queen and her ministers of their own accord, not at the instigation of foreigners, of diplomatists or missionaries, whether French or English. On no point have the nobles and the Court been so careful and so jealous as on the introduction of a foreign influence into their national affairs. The English missionaries at the capital,—whom they regard as their best friends, because missionaries of that London Missionary Society which first brought them the Gospel, and did all it could to befriend them in their days of trial,—have not been invited to preach in the palace, except as visitors. No attempts have been made to guide or to control the proceedings of the Churches, and the native ministers are treated with great respect. When the second memorial church was opened, the Queen and all her officers were present. On Christmas Day she received an address from her Christian subjects ; and in April last, after meekly submitting to the same instruction and the same catechizing as her people, the Queen was herself baptized as a Christian. The Prime Minister, also, and several leading officers, with numerous members of noble families, women as well as men, have made a public profession of their faith, and at their own request have been received into the fellowship of the Church. In order to bring the loose family arrangements, prevalent in the island in the days of heathenism, under the control of Gospel morality, the Queen and Prime Minister were duly married in the presence of their people. This service, like their baptism, was conducted by one of the native ministers. The first stone of a Chapel Royal has been laid within the palace enclosure, and the Queen and her Court maintain Christian worship in the capital of Madagascar as the ordinary habit of their lives. Now, to crown the whole, we hear

that, in September last, it was resolved in national assembly to burn the public idols, and thus to rid the land of the superstitions, in defence of which so much sorrow had been inflicted. The transformation of the people, so strangely intensified in its earlier movements by the persecution which was undertaken to prevent it, is proceeding with marvellous rapidity and power ; and soon, largely as the result of the preaching of native ministers, Madagascar, like Hawaii, will become a Christian state, sanctified in all her public, social, and national concerns, by the spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

How will the critics and opposers of missions explain these things? Neither bribery, nor force, political influence, nor mere respect for superior knowledge, has effected this change. Persecution and force are directed against the Gospel for a whole generation ; yet they leave the converts more earnest, more determined, more numerous, than when the penalties began. The whole people have been profoundly impressed by the purity, the fidelity, the faith of the men and women who have laid down their lives rather than deny their Saviour. The Word which they believed and followed, is sought after by all. When freedom comes, and penalties are withdrawn, thousands without delay enquire and believe. In due time, tens of thousands follow them, and listen, and believe also. The nobles, who when young heard these truths from relatives in peril ; the Queen, on whom, when a young girl, Christ's truth was pressed by one of the martyrs ; have felt that truth in their hearts, and by it rule their lives. All this has happened in other kingdoms, in other ages, as well as in recent days. But nowhere, since the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost, has the work of the Gospel been more thorough, the victories of the Gospel more rapid and more complete, than in Madagascar. Nowhere have the evidences of

its spiritual power been manifested more clearly, or have the arguments drawn from them proved so truly unanswerable. Therefore, Christian men of all Churches look in wonder upon the picture, and give God thanks. Everywhere they lift up their voices with one accord, and acknowledge, "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

IV. Let us next survey the missions of our Indian Empire. That empire is the noblest sphere of effort which the world ever presented to the Christian Church, or which that Church can desire. Enclosing within its boundaries all varieties of climate, scenery, and soil, through the loving care of God, it is fitted to secure in a thousand ways the comfort of the teeming millions which people its broad, fair provinces. If we ask for the most ancient shrines of the world still held in honour, we find them here. If we ask whence East and West have purchased their finest muslins and their richest shawls, they speak of India. Its silks and spices contributed to the luxury of Rome; and still, in its great durbars, "the gorgeous East with richest hand showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold." The peacock throne of Delhi is the noblest seat on which kings and kaisars ever sat. The simplest, grandest monument, which builders ever devised, is the Taj at Agra.

But richer jewels than these are the noble races that inhabit the empire, and amongst which great deeds have been performed. In the long vista of bygone years, the eye rests on Semiramis, Darius, and Alexander, whose names still live in shadowy tradition among the tribes which witnessed their prowess and felt their power. In later days, Affghan and Mongol and Persian from without, Sikh and Mahratta from within, have fought fierce battles to make the land their own. Portuguese and Frenchmen sought in vain

to win it; but Englishmen are its appointed masters, and have given it a security, a freedom, and a peace, which it never enjoyed till now. The desire of Europe, the coveted prize of Asia, its people have increased, have won name and fame, have suffered and have done dire wrong; till, by a wondrous providence, they have been placed in English hands to receive the justice and the care of Christian governors, and to be cherished by the love of the Christian Church.

And they need all that good government and holy teaching can do for them. For ages the myriads have lived only for the few. Princes, landholders, merchants, have gathered and enjoyed wealth; but the peasantry have just gained a livelihood, and the millions inhabiting the hills and jungles have been treated as outcasts, or been left to the wild barbarism in which they were first found. Throughout Hindu society the tyranny of caste has set tribe against tribe, family against family, and one pursuit against another. Wicked gods have been their models, ugly idols their objects of worship, vile legends the matter of their instruction; cruel have been their rites, and a lordly priesthood has been the only guide to religion and holiness that they could find. Millions have known nothing better than a simple demon-worship; and conscience has been perverted and stifled, till its voice has become very strange. Only the faith of Christ will prove a radical cure for the evils which have afflicted India for countless generations. Ignorance may be removed by knowledge; material comfort may be secured by the earnest toil, which is protected by just law. But the errors of a sinful soul which substitute Fate for God, and leave that soul the prey of dark vices, can be overcome only by that Divine truth, which, applied by Divine power, regenerates nations by renewing their individual people. He only can make a new nation who can form a new man.

Benefits of many kinds have been conferred upon the empire in large degree. The population of India, now numbering two hundred millions, speaking ten principal languages and some seventy minor tongues, is steadily, even rapidly, reviving under English rule, and has already achieved an amount of solid improvement, which only those can adequately appreciate who have seen it with their own eyes. Indirectly that powerful influence of broad sympathies, which is exerted upon its people by intercourse with Englishmen, and by the generous tone of English ideas, is loosening the ties which hold its people in serried ranks, and is breaking down the barriers which have hitherto hindered growth and change. A just Government, ably administered, has not only granted civil rights to all classes, but gives complete religious liberty, and has wonderfully freed the land from religious animosity. The higher classes rejoice in the career opening up to them in varied forms of Government service, and the peasantry have obtained a greater command of physical comforts than their class ever before enjoyed. To the direct religious teaching of this multitude of people, more than twenty missionary societies devote a sum of £300,000 a-year, and the labours of a fourth of all the Protestant missionaries in the world.

Their earnest service has been applied efficiently only during sixty years. And when the great aim they contemplate, and the mighty difficulties in their way, are duly considered, is it unnatural that missionaries should ask that time be allowed for their work to tell before the question of success is pressed? Time has been needed for the trunk railways, not yet completed. Time has been required for the development of steam traffic on the great rivers and along the sea coasts. Time has been needed to carry out the grand schemes of Government, in laws and in land settlements, in executive organ-

ization and public works, in police and in roads. Time has been given for education, yet the Universities are only ten years old; vernacular education has scarcely been touched; female education has but just begun. Ought great results to be expected, when the missionaries are so few amongst so many: when they are less than six hundred among two hundred millions of possible scholars, not caring to be taught? Nevertheless, we are not concerned to press the plea. So rich and full has been God's blessing on his servants' labours, that in the face of all opposition and of all questioning, we will plead that blessing alone. With fifty thousand Church members, in a community of a quarter of a million of converts, and with ninety thousand scholars in the Indian mission-schools, we are prepared to meet all comers, and boldly ask where are the signs of failure.

Missionary work has affected the country in very different degrees, and has met with very varied results among different classes. For instance, in the North-West provinces and the Punjab, the work was commenced in strength only forty years ago; in the Punjab proper, less than twenty years ago. Good men have toiled; they have preached the Gospel faithfully; they have educated thousands of boys, have circulated thousands of books. Apparently, very little has been done. The adults converted and baptized have been very few. Were it not for the communities raised artificially from orphan boarding-schools, the native Churches would be very small. The population, though numerous, is widely scattered, and is chiefly agricultural; cities like Benares, Furruckabad, and Delhi are few and distant from one another. There is a dullness and a deadness of intellect about the strong people, once so warlike, which it is difficult to account for. Occupying the original seat of Hinduism, still full of holy shrines, the scene of many religious wars in ancient days,

enjoying little religious liberty under Mohammedan rulers such as Allah the Pathan and Alungir, the Hindus of Upper India, though a noble race, seem to be a crushed people ; they are uneducated, ignorant, superstitious, absorbed in material pleasures and in earthly work. Yet even among them, as last year closed, suddenly there appeared a sign of truest progress, which shows how the silent life of a dull winter prepares for a beautiful and joyous spring. When a native scholar with eloquent tongue preaches to admiring thousands that the Vedas teach theism, and that the idolatrous Puranas are not worth a cowry, and when the holy city of Benares witnesses a religious commotion such as it has not experienced for centuries, the days of temples and idols must be numbered, and a cry for truth and God must be ready to break forth from multitudes of weary hearts.

In the cities which rule the public opinion of Indian society, men have much to lose in forsaking the religion not only of their forefathers, but of the companions and neighbours among whom they dwell. Hindu punishments even for inquiry are prompt ; they are still more stern for the men who embrace the Gospel. Country Churches grow faster than those in towns ; far larger numbers of the peasantry, than of the wealthy supporters of Hinduism, have become Christians. "Have any of the rulers believed on him ?" is the question asked now, as in the days of the Master. Most numerous of all, and most easily drawn, are the converts from the hill tribes, the outside races, who are Hindus but slightly, if they are Hindus at all. More than two hundred thousand converts have been made among these races, for whom Mr. Hunter has of late pleaded so warmly, and who will play no inconsiderable part in the future of the empire. Three specimens of the work effected among them may be briefly glanced at.

1. The aboriginal tribes of Shanars, living near Cape Comorin, have given a hundred thousand converts to the Church of Christ. They are the special care of the two schemes of effort known as the Tinnevely and the Travancore missions. The former contains two missions of the Church of England; the latter belongs to the London Missionary Society. The three missions are carried on upon the same principles, and have produced substantially the same results. The Shanars are evidently a very ancient tribe in India. An oppressed race, living on sugar, daily climbing lofty palm-trees, densely ignorant, with scarcely an idea about God, fearing only demon-powers in the sky, the air and earth around them, worshipping these demons with wild dances of devil-priests, rude revelry, and barbaric music, they found in the Gospel, and in the missionaries who taught it, true friends. For the first time they heard of an Almighty Father, able to save them from harm, of a Redeemer who is willing to wash away their sins, and they welcomed the message as good news of hope and peace and life. They have readily placed themselves under instruction. At times, three thousand have joined one mission in a single year. They have been organized into congregations, and proofs have been given in abundance that the Christian community contains true believers, devout worshippers, and men zealous for the conversion of their brethren. Their contributions to Church schemes, to the erection of chapels, to the support of their pastors, and to the extension of a sound literature, have for a long series of years been truly liberal. When, two years ago, the outlay of one Society was necessarily curtailed, individuals and congregations promptly stepped forward to supply what was wanting; and while the heathen taunted them with the loss of their friends, they nobly replied by a more earnest consecration of themselves and their own

gifts. Among the Shanars there are six hundred native catechists and teachers, and more than forty have been ordained as pastors or missionaries among their brethren.

2. A similar work has in recent years taken place in Bengal, among the Koles, in the beautiful province of Chota Nagpore. Descendants, probably of the earliest races in India, free of caste, and demon-worshippers, they were quite open to the teaching of the Gospel, and needed it not less than others. Though manly, once truthful and lighthearted, they are great drinkers, and very corrupt in life; their belief in witchcraft is universal, and has not unfrequently led to murder. The German missionaries from Berlin, who have been their instructors, settled among them in 1846; after only four years of preparation, they came steadily into the Christian Church, and the stream is flowing more deeply every year. In seven years, four hundred and twenty adults were baptized, and a Christian community was gathered of more than eight hundred souls. In recent days, scores have embraced the Gospel at one time. More than once, above a hundred, young and old, have been baptized in the Ranchi Church on a single Sunday. During 1861, three hundred adults were baptized. At the present time the mission numbers more than twelve thousand converts.

It cannot be said that this race has been bribed. The German mission, labouring among them, is more poorly paid, and has smaller funds for general expenditure, than any mission in India. It cannot be said that the converts have nothing to lose, and everything to gain. A great number of them possess large farms; and their well-built cottages, their beautiful rice baskets, and fat cattle are signs of substantial wealth. They have been long and bitterly persecuted. The great landholders of the province, knowing and fearing the free thought which Christianity produces, from the first set their faces against

it, and brought to bear upon the Christians all the social persecution which they could command. False charges were brought against them into the courts ; their houses were plundered by armed bands ; the very roofs were carried away, and the jewellery of the women were stripped off. During the Mutiny, all their chapels were pulled to pieces ; the converts were driven from their homes, and a price was set upon their heads. They have borne their sufferings meekly ; they have taken "joyfully the spoiling of their goods ; knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance ;" elders and people remained firm in their faith ; and the trial only added strength to the principle which was roughly assailed.

3. The Karen Mission in Burmah is better known than either of those just named, and it has had a truly wonderful success. Belonging to one of the Tartar races, perfectly free from idolatry, and holding remarkable traditions akin to early Scripture stories, the Karens were "a people prepared for the Lord." From the moment they heard from a missionary the story of the "White Book," they grasped it as the thing of which their fathers had spoken ; and they began to flock steadily into the Church of Christ. Before the Burmese war of 1852, the converts numbered eight thousand persons, who were distinguished for their simplicity, sincerity, and earnestness ; and had the strongest attachment to the Word of God. Those of them who lived in Pegu, were bitterly persecuted by the proud Burmans. They were fined, imprisoned, put in "the block," and made pagoda-slaves ; and in Bassein one of their pastors, Thagua, was crucified. To escape from their enemies, they fled in thousands over the mountains to the English province of Arracan ; and when the English soldiers attacked Rangoon, none prayed so earnestly that they might win the victory, as the Christian Karens. Their joy, at the annexation of Pegu, was

indescribable. "Before the English took possession, we could neither breathe nor sleep." Since then, the mission has grown with rapidity and power. New districts, like Tounghu, have been instructed for the first time; and the Gospel has penetrated far into the forests and hills which form the boundary between Burmah and Siam. Normal schools, theological classes, translations of the Bible and Christian books, have been building up the Churches; and some of their preachers, like Sau Quala, have been endowed with Apostolic zeal. The Karen converts are believed to number over ninety thousand; and the mission is not yet forty years old.

In the cases that have been cited, the ample success secured has been attained among rude and simple populations. Such classes have been comparatively free from those caste rules which are the terror of Hindu social life; and being frequently oppressed and despised, they have found in the Gospel a loving friend, and the cravings of humanity have been satisfied in its embrace. They must not be forgotten in any view of the Indian Empire,—political, commercial, or religious. Tribes of this kind form half of its population. But the middle-classes of Indian society are also feeling the power of the Gospel. It was difficult to reach them. They would not condescend to listen to a missionary in a promiscuous crowd. But Dr. Duff and others solved the difficulty, when they drew their children into English schools, and with a broad general education, gave them a full and careful insight into the word of God. Within the last twenty years, more than five hundred converts of the middle-classes, sons of traders, gentlemen, Brahmins, and temple priests have been converted in Christian schools. The public baptism of such a young man has again and again set a city in an uproar. In Madras and Calcutta, in Bombay and Poona, in Bangalore and Palamcottah, and

in many other towns, Hindu society has been convulsed to its centre by such a conversion, and appeals have been made to magistrates and judges to prevent the social wrong which missionaries were accused of inflicting. To these appeals the converts themselves have given the answer: "We are of age; we know what we are doing; we believe in Jesus Christ." From this class of educated men, have sprung able preachers and ordained ministers, of whom the rising Church stood greatly in need.

Results like these, though great and valuable, do not exhaust the list of our successes; and that they are real cannot be denied. Nowhere have missions and missionaries been so fully tested as in India. In Indian society everything is open; a free press, English and native, is available to all comers. Missionaries know this, and like it. As honest men, they have nothing to fear. They have themselves freely used the press. The daily newspapers, the monthly periodicals, the "*Calcutta Review*," have reported their work and their successes year after year. When Dr. Macleod openly invited gainsayers to prove the exaggerations of reports, or the hollowness of results, none ventured to reply. Native gentlemen assured him of the high regard in which missionaries were held by them, as benefactors of the country; and Englishmen and natives gathered in the largest assemblies, held in the three chief cities in recent years, with the Viceroy, with governors and officers at their head, to testify the same thing, and to manifest an interest in their success. Those meetings were but the natural outcome of that Christian zeal which leads our countrymen in India to contribute £50,000 a-year for the support of those missionary labours which they witness with their own eyes.

There is one other fruit of missionary labour in India, which cannot be forgotten. It may almost be deemed the greatest of these fruits, and yet it contributes to

strengthen and increase the rest. I refer to the extensive spread of Christian knowledge, and to the profound impression which Christian ideas have made upon society in general. Vast changes have been wrought in the ideas of the ruling classes, in respect to government, to social habits, the possession of lands, the relations of one province of the empire with another. A quarter of a million of children are being trained every year in good schools; and three quarters of a million more in common schools, reading books such as the scholars of old days did not possess.* Ninety thousand of these children are in missionary schools, and of these great numbers are Hindus. Christian preaching, Christian schools, Christian literature are filling the country with ideas of God, of truth, of holiness, which are acknowledged to be just, and are extensively accepted. The new school, formed especially of the young men who have received an English education, have to an immense extent cast off the traditions of their fathers. They hold that idolatry ought to be renounced, and only the one God recognized; that caste is an evil, and ought to be broken down; that polygamy ought to be abolished by law; that infant marriages should be prevented; that women should be educated, and should take their place in society; that moral life ought to be pure. Others go beyond this, and desire that a higher faith should be received, and made the law of life. Whence did these great ideas spring? They have come from that general education which has been saturated by the Christian truth, which fills English literature and English life. But specially and directly they have sprung from the teaching of missionaries, and will prepare the way for conversions on a large scale. Who can wonder that, under such influences, Hinduism is steadily dying, and that the religious belief of the country is undergoing a vital change. A noble future is opening

for India, and a wondrous empire will she become. "The cities are great, and walled up to heaven ; and we have seen the giants, the sons of Anak there." The priests are numerous ; their vested interests are great ; their name and influence are revered. But we have brought away clusters from the vines, and we have seen that the land floweth with milk and honey. As God's people, at His command and under His leadership, we will "go up and possess the land, for we are well able to possess it."

V. Valuable results of a high order have been attained in smaller missions, the details of which are in general little known. Few are aware, for instance, that in recent years a little company of colporteurs, guided by English advice, and sustained by English funds, have spread among the Catholic populations of Europe, ten million copies of the Scriptures, in the languages which those populations speak. Few are aware that, under the earnest preaching of an English missionary, and of his Swedish companion, a remarkable revival has taken place in the religious life of Sweden. In the Turkish Empire, the missionaries of the American Board have won to evangelical faith and life, a large number of the members of the decayed Armenian Church ; while political contact with other countries, and the spread of religious and secular knowledge, have aroused a new spirit in the Mussalman population, and led many to study the Word of God. At the mouth of the Gambia, and all round the Gulf of Guinea, strong Christian Churches, in compact and prosperous communities, have been built up by missionary agency, and the slave-trade has been completely dried up. In the Cape Colony, Hottentots, Fingoes and Kafirs have been delivered from the grasp of slaveholders, and from the influence of a vitiated public opinion ; have been confirmed in their civil liberties, and have been instructed and evangelized. Two hundred mis-

sionaries have devoted themselves to the elevation of these despised races, have penetrated far into Kafirland, and have established a line of stations among the Bechuana tribes, stretching onward to the Victoria Falls. The preservation and instruction of the Indian tribes of North America have long been the earnest care of the Christians of New England. In Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee; among Cherokees and Ojibbeways, among Sioux and Dakotahs; in settled states and on the open prairies, they have preached to, have advised and helped them, have educated their children, have taught them to observe the Sabbath, to give up their constant wanderings, and to cultivate the soil. And, in spite of the speculator and the rum seller, many a Church has been gathered, and many a true revival has been experienced, among these decaying tribes.

Hard things have been said against the missions in China, yet several of them have received a great blessing, and have met with most gratifying success. For several years about ninety missionaries from Europe and America have been steadily labouring in the great cities, opened to them as treaty ports. In most of the cities occupied since 1842, considerable Churches have been gathered. Many hundreds of Chinese converts are communicants in the three missions of Amoy, and the districts around them; in the missions of Foochow, in Shanghai and its neighbourhood, in Hong Kong, and in the country districts of Kwantung. Even in Hankow, the mission to which is but eight years old, two hundred adults have been brought into the Church. Everywhere the Chinese listen readily to the Gospel; and the whole community has been stirred not a little by the new doctrines which the missionaries have proclaimed. The native Churches contain three thousand five hundred communicants, in a Christian community of twelve thousand persons.

Things still harder have been alleged again and again against the missions in the West India Islands. It has been often asserted that the negroes are degraded, indolent, and dishonest. But who made them so? Who degraded them for generations, by forbidding them to marry? Who rendered them unthrifty, dishonest, unenterprising, by refusing them liberty and the right to enjoy the fruit of their own labours? Who compelled them, by hard service under the lash, to be idle when they had an opportunity, and to hide their indolence by lying? For these things, the system of slavery is to a very large degree responsible. Nevertheless, Christian men of all Churches steadily resolved to set them free, and to elevate them by the Gospel. Throughout these colonies, under every government, chapels were built, schools were established, and congregations were gathered. Solid results in true piety were speedily realized, especially among the older people, who had suffered the heaviest wrongs. These results have increased in strength and fulness down to the present hour. And that a vast number of consistent Christians is to be found among the coloured Churches in all missions, can be proved by the evidence of governors, resident Englishmen, and visitors, and cannot be doubted by men who will honestly enquire from those who really know.

VI. To these spiritual and social results of missionary labour, sought by that labour, directly springing from it, and contributing to still greater successes in days to come, we might add the indirect victories, obtained by the way, over public evils abroad; and describe at length the valuable benefits indirectly conferred upon the Churches which sustained those missions at home. The English communities in foreign settlements, and many an individual man, have been instructed, elevated, and purified, in moral life and social tone, by the preaching

and example of missionaries. More than any other Englishmen abroad did missionaries contribute to the abolition of slavery; to the separation of the Indian Government from its administration of the endowments of Hindu temples; to the promotion of education; to the enactment of many a good law; to the foundation of a healthy Christian literature; to the establishment of a sound public opinion.

The benefits which have been conferred upon the Church at home by its engagement in missionary work are numerous and of high value. While following the path of duty the Church has experienced that elevation of its loftiest powers which difficult enterprises always bring to the manly and true-hearted. Its faith in the power of the Gospel, its devoutness, its liberality, have been enlarged. Its sympathies have become broader; its true unity has been deepened; controversies between Evangelical Christians have almost died away.

A most powerful stimulus has been given by the enterprise to every form of home mission work; and the same ingenuity has been exercised to invent new plans for new emergencies, and to adapt forms of agency to the varied spheres of usefulness which had been chosen. The charitable spirit of society at large has been enormously developed, until in London alone five hundred definite "charities" expend, wisely or unwisely, a million sterling every year. The missionary spirit has greatly stimulated general education. It has been manifested in the great temperance movement. It has re-modelled our popular literature. It has given a scientific form to a wise, but humane prison discipline. It has called forth many aggressive schemes for the instruction of country towns. It has given birth to such marvellous efforts for the evangelizing of London, that if to the direct instructions of the thirteen hundred and fifty ministers and clergy

of all denominations, be added the special labours of four hundred City missionaries, of a hundred and twenty missionary clergy, of twenty thousand Sunday-school teachers, of three thousand ragged-school teachers, and of two hundred and thirty Bible women, we are compelled to conclude, that there is now exerted upon the unconverted population of London alone as large an amount of spiritual force as is exercised by foreign missions upon all the countries of the heathen world.

No one can contemplate the great nations and populous tribes of the world in the present day without observing that the stagnation of old times has ceased; that a new life is quickening all the pulses of human thought; that justice, humanity, and gentleness have recently made a great stride; that old creeds and faiths are losing their hold; and that the public opinion of the world is indubitably healthier than it was a century ago. The degrees of this improvement vary greatly among different people. Much of the progress is intellectual; much has sprung merely from the increased intercourse between nations, and the vast increase of trade. But a great deal of it is moral and religious. It is best and greatest in lands where cities abound, where society is compact, and where modern influences have been brought to bear in greatest force. Whence does this progress spring? Whence come these doubts about old times and old customs; whence this new thought, this rapid change of ideas, this difference between the new generation and its predecessors? The largest share of this wonderful growth has come from the moral influence of Christian nations, from their enlightened opinion, their solid freedom, their generous recognition of the rights of all classes, especially of the poor; from their even-handed justice, and their benevolent regard for human life. This justice and generosity again, so powerful for general good, have

sprung from the earnest spirit of the religious men, and of the prosperous Churches, who sustain missionaries in the world; and from that aggressive benevolence and good-will to mankind, of which missionaries are the ablest expounders and the most prominent examples.

Surveying as a whole the varied results which we have enumerated, how truly great they appear in comparison with the moderate amount of labour that has been employed to produce them. There are solid fruits of toil at home, solid results abroad: results in some lands wide-spread, deep-rooted, amazing in their grandeur and completeness. We have created great systems of agency, skilfully adapted to the states of society with which they have to deal. The message preached, and the holy life enjoined, are enforced by translations of the Bible, and by a Christian literature, published in all the principal languages of the world. We see native Churches, strong in numbers, growing in character, sound in the faith. We have trained and devoted native pastors, and we know that some native missionaries have been distinguished for Apostolic zeal, and have braved a martyr's death. We see tribes and nations that have laid aside their old superstitions, and through a Christian civilization are taking a new place among their fellow-men. Great barriers against the profession of Christian faith have given way—bigotry in Turkey, caste in India, exclusiveness in China. Many of the idolatries, of the ancient wrongs, of the black vices of the world have entirely disappeared. We see Christian nations growing more Christian, more humane; and Christian men rendered more earnest in doing good. We see the dark world coming to the light; and the lands where Christians dwell, revived, enlarged, refreshed. Is it not an impiety to call missions a failure? Rather may we exclaim with wonder, and with gratitude, "What hath God wrought!"

To Christian men these results excite no surprise. The Bible has promised them, and leads true workers to expect them. The followers of Christ have learned the great secret how souls may be saved. They have found, and can apply that motive power, that spiritual energy, which shall originate, and shall secure every real reform which a disordered world needs. This power has no human origin. The doctrine and the message are supernaturally revealed. The enlightenment which grasps and appreciates them is given from above. The nature of the man, who receives them, is renewed by the Spirit of God. From Him comes the daily grace that leads the soul onward, victor over all evil, strong to do all good.

There is power in the physical world, varied in its forms, wonderful in its working, stupendous in its effects. Mighty winds sweep over wide-spread provinces, laying low the kings of the forest, and hurling to destruction the works of men. There is power in the sea, when the floods lift up their waves, when the ships of man mount up to the heaven and go down into the depths, and the souls of men melt because of trouble. The heaving earth cleaves asunder the lofty sierras, crumbles to dust the proud cities men have built, and rolls over their shores vast ocean waves, submerging myriads of people. Frost and fire exert their potent spells on earth and sea and air; setting the stars a-blaze, crowning the Alpine ranges with stainless snow, and carving the surface of the earth with hill, and valley, and fertile plain. The still, subtle sunlight quickens the pulses of life in all that lives; overlaying the earth with colour and beauty; filling all creatures with gladness, and brightening the heart and life of man.

The intellect of man gathers its trophies in pyramids, palaces, and temples, which are the wonder of succeeding generations, and even in their ruins speak his praise.

His vessels cover the waters ; his iron roads girdle the earth ; he tames the lightning to carry his messages ; he brings forth from the earth the stores of ages—coal for his engines, gold for his vessels, and pearls and jewels to adorn the beauty that he loves. His genius soars to the loftiest flights of poetry, awakens the tenderest sympathies by music and by song, by matchless eloquence incites to deeds of heroism, lays up in books the experience of ages, or tells the motion of the stars, or searches into the constitution of the sun.

But the noblest power lies not in material forces, in imperial rule, in the wisdom of statesmen, the attainments of scholars, or the magnificence commanded by a nation's wealth. Self-denial compels the approval denied to authority ; benevolence buys more than wealth ; faith and self-sacrifice and prayer win hearts which dungeons could not subdue. The mightiest power in heaven and in earth is a self-sacrificing love. Its most attractive emblem is the Cross ; and by that Cross all that is noble and precious in the world shall be completely subdued. Because they have proved that love, Christian men will continue to preach it with all their heart. They will preach it to the wise, that they may be yet wiser ; to the wealthy, that they may win true riches ; and in the face of all gainsayers, they will preach it to the poor and the outcast, because they are men, and because for them, too, Christ died,—grateful and glad if, when the day of the Lord come, He shall approve their service, and shall welcome them as an accepted people : “ Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me.”

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